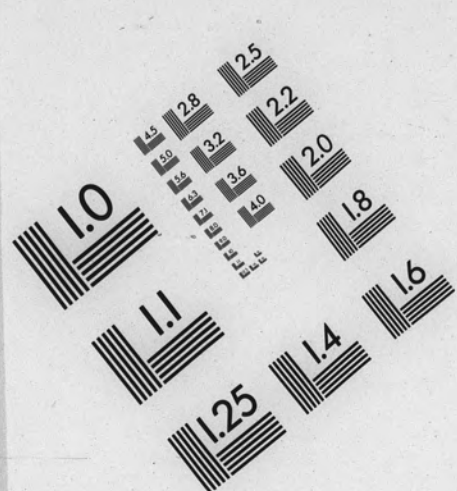
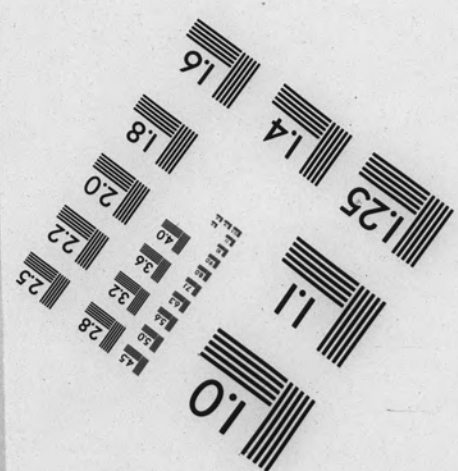
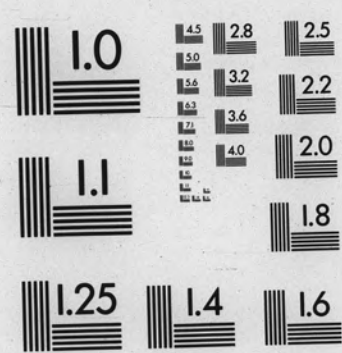
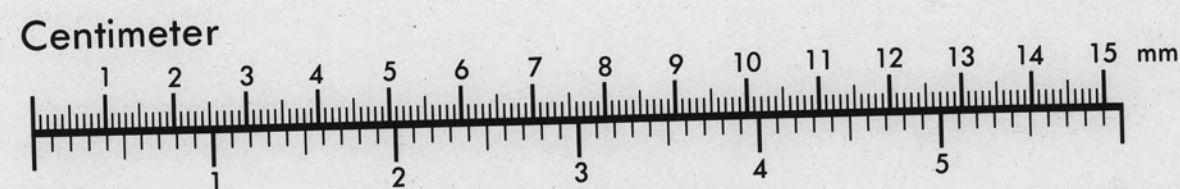
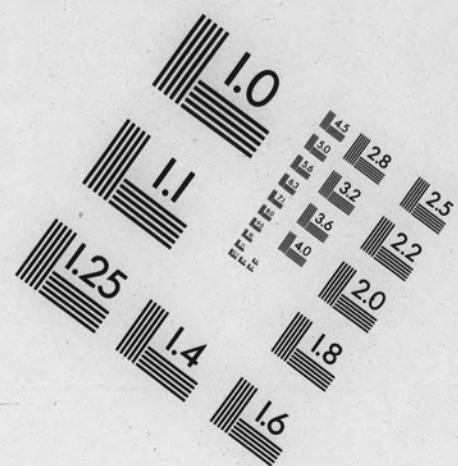


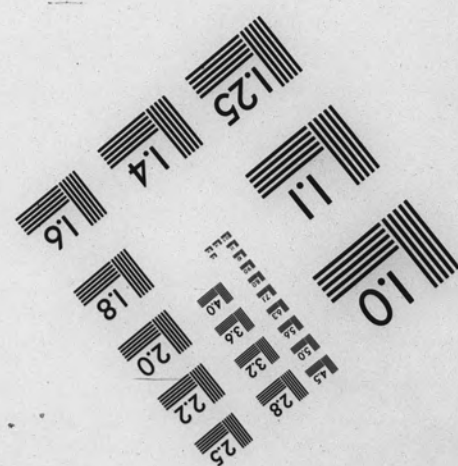
Journal, 1949.



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JOURNAL OF FRANCOIS MIGNON

- 1949 -

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Sunday, January 2nd, 1949.

Memorandum:

Warm, with a slow gentle rain all day, which was just
made for the children at Arenbourg.

All people of color in this neighborhood pay the
strictest attention to the first twelve days of January, on
the firm belief each day's weather determines the characteristic
nature of each of the twelve months of the year. On their
theory, February is going to be a wash-out.

On the plantation, nothing much is done about New Year's
Eve or New Year's Day, and so everything rocked along much
as usual yesterday, a clear, cool day. The only alteration in
our usual routine was to have dinner with Celeste and J. A. and
Madam Regard. Frances Henry and her Mother were also invited,
but Pat, having returned to Baton Rouge, Dan gone to New Orleans
and Paynie to Remont, Ohio, our number was limited to eight,
counting in the two clerks from the store.

I had rather expected the hands yesterday or today, but
I reckon the weather dissuaded them from coming up today. I
talked with Mrs. Rand on the telephone the other day and she
asked if she might bring Natalie Scott with her on her next
trip. You may recall that Natalie did a Louisiana cook book
or some such with Bill Spratling a number of years ago, and
subsequently was associated with him in his silver business in
Mexico, - until their artistic temperaments induced Bill to
insist that the McGrande should definitely be a line of
demarkation between their respective lines of endeavor. Since
then Natalie has had crossed it in two world wars, and in the
second go-round operated as far afield as Dakar and Tokio.

It was Natalie's brother who caused such a flurry in
the Alexandria insurance companies in the early 1930's when
he had his life insured for two hundred thousand dollars, with
double indemnity in case of accidental death, shortly after which
he was killed by the explosion of his revolver, which, his
wife explained, he tossed into his dresser drawer on retiring one
night. If accident it was, it was remarkable, and the thing
went to the courts, I believe, but in the end his wife
collected the four hundred thousand dollars at a time when
the family need a little extra cash badly. As for Natalie,
she is alright, but she strikes me as though she might be
able to do something equally timely if the occasion demanded.

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Along about first dark tonight, Peter tapped on my window. He had come at the request of the family occupying the cabin just beyond the bamboo hedge of my white garden. Mancey, - what a name, - Mancey Balthazar lives there with his wife and a couple grandchildren. He is a patient of Dr. Knipmayer who told me a couple of weeks ago the man would probably die in March. But there is apparently still much vigor, physically, if not much mental strength in the man, for it seems he put the family out of the house sometime during the morning and they have been staying with friends until someone would call the Sheriff to come get Mancey. My aid was sought in this matter, but I called Dr. Knipmayer's residence instead, for the man obviously requires a sedative or hospitalization, - not jail. A malignant growth which cannot be removed appears to be effecting poor Mancey's brain, and I hope that Dr. Knipmayer can get rest and relief to the poor soul through drugs before he runs completely amuck.

Belatedly, and on second thought, perhaps New Year's Day does make some impression on Cane River fold. This morning, for the second time in all the years she has worked here, Aurellia failed to show up. She was rather groggy yesterday with a cold, and possibly she had a time with her papa last night, for my grapevine reports that he was "high as a Georgia pine" and the local honkey-tonk last night. And on the same side of the ledger, Celeste's servant also failed to appear today. Her little brother told Celeste that his sister went to the "honkey-tonkey" last evening and never did get back home, so perhaps people at "elrose as well as Manhattan and elsewhere, do incline toward getting the New Year started with gusto. John Gunther in "Inside U. S. A." remarks that somebody in The Nation once wrote that many people have been effected by the writings of Marcel Proust without ever having heard of the man or read a line from A la Recherche. I doubt very much if many people in these parts, - especially the younger fry, ever gave much thought to the advent of the New Year, but they possibly have been effected nevertheless by its advent.

I never did turn on my radio all day, what with trying to get caught up on my mail. I am sure I missed much in thus neglecting the kilocycles for the keyboard, but there is a measure of satisfaction in the realization that I am approaching the bottom of the stack of letters that both my desk and my memory have supported too long. By now your little guest has probably returned to school, and after a week away from the office, I hope you find returning to it not too strenuous and that some sort of a desirable routine may be yours straight ahead. Now I shall turn to mes pantoufles, my sading machine and a cup of tea, and so call it a day, in all except in thought waves.....

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Monday, January 3rd, 1949.

Memorandum:

Warm-warm, with pin point sprinkles, snadwiched in between occasional gleams of sunshine, - making it a perfect day for casting about at Arenbourg.

To our collection, I added a fine specimen in the gardenia class, which should be well established in its new situation before the cold wave, scheduled for early morning eashes us.

I also made the most of my opportunity to set out privet, placing three plants between each pear and persimmon along the North-South drive from the raggedy house to the Alphonse gate. This will give us a wall of green in winter when the fruit trees are dormant, and I have so spaced the individual bushes so we may set in nandina between each privet, - or, possibly a flock of crepe myrtles, for white and flame colorings in the summer. I shall keep the privet clipped so it will not attain a height of more than four or five feet, so the hedge will not encroach on the fruit trees while the latter are going, and within a year or so, both the pears and persimmons should be well over the heads of the flanking greenery connecting them.

Pilgrims arriving at "elrose called me back just as I had finished putting out the hedge, and I didn't take time to survey the job after finishing it, but I imagine it looked fairly straight, and I shall have an extra incentive to scurry up the road a little earlier than usual in the morning to take a final gander at my fine handiwork.

Aurellia was back on the job again today, after having spent yesterday in bed. But Celeste's servant didn't return, and although the girl's brother, who sometimes helps with Celeste's minor gardening exploits, came to do what he could of his sister's work, Celeste was very much disturbed. The failure of servants to appear certainly does raise unpleasant aspects of life, but I never could understand how that circumstance could throw one into a depression and a crossness that would ruin one's outlook on all phases of life for days on end. Personally I put such reactions in the class of luxuries I, myself, would never be able to afford, since my own peace of mind and my own appreciation of harmony in human contacts far out-weighs

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the thrill I would get in turning myself temporarily into an emotional whirling dervish.

In Natchitoches, the gossips are having a go at a murder that occurred near town on Saturday. Some dumb white trash are the focal point of the business. A youth had been courting a married woman for some time. On Saturday they walked down the railroad track, from town for two miles, entered the woods, where later the woman was found dead, her throat cut with a jack knife. They found the youth's picture in her pocket book, and on contacting him, a confession was readily forthcoming. The Sheriff told me this afternoon, when stopping by the store, that he had asked the youth if he had assaulted the woman before killing her. The youth said: "I didn't assault her."

"No, sir, I didn't assault her. She spread her coat on the ground for us first." Those words were said to me by Mrs. Rand telephoned this morning to say that the doctor was up this way yesterday, but didn't tarry, what with the weather having gummed up the detours between here and Alexandria so badly that he thought it better to keep right on going, and so neither stopped here or at his camp. I reckon the next go-round will be on Wednesday. I have just responded to the appeal of my big yellow cat who, when hungry, has a way of catching his claws in the screen door, drawing it back and letting it bang gently to announce he is in a mood for a dish of milk. Never does he cry, but merely employs the feline equivalent of tapping at my chamber door. There is a young moon sloping westwardly and a balmy breeze from the South that is so warm a jacket would be too much. It is difficult to imagine how the thermometer can drop to 32 tonight, as predicted.

Last night I read a couple of pages from the Gunther book, the chapter covering The Chicago Tribune and sketches of the Ford Empire and of Walter Reuther. I found the latter item of especial interest, and partially because I knew very little about him in his more youthful phase, his bicycling jaunts with his brother across Europe in the early 1930's, and so on.

Somewhere on C. B. S. rather late last night, I heard a broadcast that I liked, a number of people of some prominence, Mr. Kaltenborne, Miss Chase, etc., identifying quotations propounded by Bob Trout, which, it now occurs to me, must have been on a National rather than a Columbia station. The line I liked best was quoted from someone whose name I didn't catch, what with a crash of static at the second the name was mentioned. The line, so pat for the position I have often taken in special instances rather something like this:

"Anybody who would go to a psycho-analyst ought to have his head examined."

Perhaps it was S. A. Goldwyn, but ay

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3372

Tuesday, January 4th, 1948. (49)

Memorandum:

How nice to have your perfectly lovely letter of Thursday in today's post. It is good to know that Christmas ran along alright, and I am hoping that the New Year got started off alright, too. I only regret that in spite of the pleasant companion you entertained, your week of respite could not have held more of "alone-ness", for I have a feeling you relish the vast opportunities which being by yourself for awhile offers. Perhaps you will get an early break in comparatively quiet week ends as a bit of compensation for the hurly-burly of the Christmas period.

Thanks for giving me particulars about the Saxon book. Perhaps you will want to write on the margin of your copy the true identity of the lady who died under the umbrella.

She was Mrs. Katherine Sargent Minor, of Oakland Plantation, mother of Duncan Minor and Miss Jeanne McDowell of whom Miss Nellie speaks occasionally. As you know, the Minors were millionaires, but Duncan, as dominant factor in the family, was both penurious and perverse, as demonstrated so often, not only in his relations with Jenny Merrill leading up to the Goat Castle business, but also in matters affecting his mother's home. Oakland had needed a new roof for some time and Duncan had purchased the shingles which were piled up along side the house. But Duncan decided that the price of roofing nails was too high and refused to buy any until the price went down. Years went along as he stubbornly refused to acquire the needed materials until at last the whole stack of shingles just rotted down. It was during this contrary period that his Mother was taken ill, and after a period of months, possibly years, actually did die during a torrential rain storm, with a big old umbrella attached to the tester of the bed to ward off the downpour.

I am glad you mentioned the names of some of the people listed as having been New Orleans friends of Lyle's, for in one instance, at least, I had completely forgotten about one husband and wife who figured prominently in Lyle's domestic arrangements for a time. I am thinking of the Howard Hunters, and I don't recall if Mem randa from here were reaching you during that period when Howard was W.P.A. director, having taken over Harry Hopkins' job when the latter moved into the Roosevelt cabinet, as Secretary of Commerce, I believe.

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Howard and Marjorie Hunter rented Lyle's Madison Street house, or an apartment in it for a time, and got up to Melrose for little visits. Through no fault of anyone's, probably, and certainly not Lyle's, - Marjorie fell in love with him, and as time ran on, was inclined to conceal her impulses less and less in the presence of her husband. This of course made things very difficult for Lyle who was very fond of both Howard and Marjorie, and I suppose it marks one of the few times in Lyle's latter years that he really strove to soft peddle liquor for everyone when Howard and Marge were present, realizing, as he did, that being in an unsettled emotional state, Marge was likely to express herself rather too frankly as to her real preferences in the presence of Lyle and Howard when the three of them were together. It must have been quite trying.

I appreciate your thoughtfulness in acquainting me with the hour Madam Roosevelt's radio program goes on the air. I haven't heard it as yet, but shall tune in on our nearest American Broadcasting Station to see if it is carried in this region. - K A. L. B. - P. M. - Alexandria.

In pursuance of my account of the gloom be-fogging Celeste's horizons yesterday, I must in fairness, report that today her person and her household simply radiate joy and happiness. I saw her at 9 this morning, and she scarcely needed to tell me that her servant had returned from her New Year's weekend jaunt with her boy friend to Alexandria. The servant is aged 15.

I gather my lack of enthusiasm for my unannounced pre-Christmas visitor must have made some effect on James Cunningham, since I haven't heard a peep from him since he was here. There was no especial occasion for him to write and I should have thought nothing about it had not Celeste read me a letter she received from him yesterday, thanking her for the hospitality he received during his recent visit, and naming her, Madam Regard, J. H. and me in his wishes for a happy New Year. After all, he did see Celeste and Madam Regard for about five minutes for a demi-tasse just before he left on the morning he left Melrose after spending the night in my house as, - I had supposed up to now, - my guest. He reported having found an apartment just around the corner from little Miss Alberta, so perhaps the two of them can be playthings together.

A note from Dr. Eleanor, inadvertently destroyed, indicates she is in bed with a slight cold and is taking her enforced rest by getting caught up with her correspondence, - which wouldn't be my idea of complete relaxation, if flattened out by a cold, but rest cures must vary widely according to the pattern of the patient. Again my thanks for the grand letter and may you please take things as slowly as possible and grab off a bit of rest and solitude when you can....

3374

Wednesday, January 5th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Secretly for many a day, I have been hoping against hope that the old red rooster, half concealed in the seat of the Reverend Dudley's pants, might unexpectedly crow. After four more letters, I shall have caught up with the stacks of mail that came fluttering in like snowflakes on me, as from November 17th to January 1st. Before folding up my beard tonight, I shall have brought my correspondence more or less into balance, and not the rooster but I shall probably be the first to sound off in relief and satisfaction.

The threatened cold snap, predicted for the past two days, never did get fully developed, although it seems rather colder than the 40 degree registration on the thermometer, probably because of the excessive humidity. Locally at this time of the year, people keep an eye on the weather with a view of slaughtering their hogs when a streak of cold weather appears in the offing, for curing the meat seems more easily accomplished when Jack Frost lends a hand to the business.

Little King dropped by this morning to say they were killing a fine hog today and that Zelma and Punny wondered if I would like to come by about dinner time to try some of the fresh liver that would grace their dinner table in consequence. Unfortunately dinner guests came just as I was about to head out across the cotton fields, and so I had to remain at Melrose and dine on fried chicken instead. But there will be other cold days and further slaughtering festivities.

This afternoon the Rands passed this way and took me to their camp for an hour's sitting. They have a wood heater in their camp which is ever so comfortable, and fortified as we were, with rich hot coffee and delicious sandwiches, we all completely ruined our appetites for anything suggestive of supper. On dropping me at the front gate on our way back, they handed me a package, containing some elegant liquor chocolates and a bottle of Apricot Liqueur, both of which I shall sample later tonight. When I have despatched this machine to read a page or two before calling it a day.

Mrs. Rand told me she had written Dr. Miller, asking her to come to visit her at Alexandria and thus be in a position to visit on Cane River at their camp if she didn't feel like stopping over at Melrose, now that the Madam is no longer here. That might work out ever so nicely for Dr. Miller, and I must say I think it is lovely of the Rands to dispense generosity and hospitality so lavishly as they inevitably do on all sides.

3375

I had supper with J. H. and Dan, and learned that J. H. was in Baton Rouge on Monday to put some finishing touches on a pamphlet about pecanes which the State is publishing between now and the 20th, I believe. As I understand it, the State is sending a pamphlet to President Truman and all the members of Congress, and Melrose is sending a sack of pecanes accompanying the pamphlet, - or perhaps the thing is the other way around. I suppose this gesture is being done with a view to making official Washington more pecane conscious, or possibly, - and only J. H. probably knows, it may be with a view to having pecanes put on some list that will place them in a category with sugar, cotton, wheat and the like, - a price floor under them, or some such business. As he was telling us about the pamphlet and the Washington shipment, I giggled inside as I recalled one of the "Madam's" lines:

"In matters of business, don't ever suppose J. H. will volunteer any information, but if he should happen to, be sure you use your own judgement in believing what he says, for he is certainly going to tell it just the way he wants it, regardless of the actual facts involved."

And so I didn't ask him if the Pecane Growers Association was giving birth to an embryo lobby, for I realized perfectly well that either an affirmative or negative answer might be equally true or otherwise.

Late Monday night, I heard a news broadcast over the Columbia system, wherein the speaker mentioned the American Ambassador, Walter B. Smith, just back from Moscow, having that same day received an honorary degree from Duquesne University of Pittsburg. I, myself, don't know how to spell the name of the University, but I allowed myself a chuckle at the man's pronunciation, for he spoke the name as though it were spelled Dukessny, which certainly must have startled Father Calahan, the Melrose priest across the river, - if he chanced to hear it, - since he is the ex-President of the said university.

Of course I didn't have time to hear the President's "State of the Union" address to Congress this noon, but I shall probably catch up with it on a re-broadcast over Des Moines at 10:30 tonight. After reading about the potential benefits of a Missouri Valley Authority in the Gunther book, I find myself hoping that Mr. Truman may both recommend and succeed in effecting further projects patterned after F. D. R.'s T. V. A., for it seems to me that in these river control projects lies more broader bases for the welfare of the next generation than almost any other type of public expenditure initiated by the Roosevelt and succeeding administrations. I can just hear Gerard Brandon's granddaughter asking me why I should care if Goat Castle caved in or was preserved since I certainly would never live in it.....

3376

Tuesday, January 6th, 1949.

Memorandum: I had a very marvelous weather, all blue and gold with the thermometer in the 50's.

But warmer weather is predicted for tomorrow, with increasing cloudiness by Saturday, and rain. And so I made the most of today's opportunity and got in a few licks at Arenbourg including the setting out of an elegant cape jessamine, and a half dozen live oaks. I think the former has a pretty good chance to make a go of it, - but live oaks are exceedingly difficult to transplant successfully, and so I continue to set out more than we shall ever want, hoping that eventually two or three may eventually make up their minds. I concentrated today's live oaks on the terrace, always hoping I can get a couple to grow there so their shade may eventually curtain the gallery when the latter comes into being.

Today, being Knipmayer Day, the good doctor stopped in for a glass of wine, but being rather late in arriving, and being hustled across the bamboo hedge to see Mancey Balthazar, I didn't have much opportunity to chat with him. I sent Miss Sally two buckets full of narcissus and a big old packing box of nandina to decorate her altar for tomorrow's service, as Dr. Knipmayer was heading directly from Melrose to Magnolia. At supper tonight, "an" told me he had stopped in to call on Miss Sally and that she was enchanted with her floral phalanx in her private chapel, so everything seems to be alright in that direction, - or at least "as well as could be expected", as Mr. Bachelier is wont to say. It is my understanding that Miss Sally never remains out of bed for more than half an hour at a stretch, and according to one lady who knows considerable about the medical aspect of things, the Mistress of Magnolia, from present appearance, is now at the top of the list of vanishing Cane River residents.

She had written Dr. Knipmayer, praying him to bring me with him for dinner today, but I declined. The last time I went there with him I didn't get back home until after 4 p.m., and I accordingly shall not run down to pay my respects until I have wound up my business in Atchitoches and have the means of pulling out an hour or so after dinner.

She is a lovely person and her dinners are delicious, but I do not share her enthusiasm for the local prelates, and consequently find myself wool-gathering when conversation lags too

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long over the signs and wonders of the wearers of the frock at St. Augustin's Church at Melrose.

And while speaking of the Church, I might mention that in reality, Magnolia actually falls within the province of the priest who presides over the faithful at Cloutierville, - a certain Father Becker, and a rip of the first water, who owns the Cloutierville movie, the local cotton gin, oil wells in South Louisiana, etc., and a man who under Huey Long, albeit a priest, drew some scandalous salary from the State in his capacity as Fire Warden or Fire Marshal, - a job that required nothing except the endorsement of the monthly checks. It is the same fellow who once said to "A.", in response to the latter's inquiry as to how business in church circles was progressing: "I don't know, but I think the church is a pretty good business."

"Hill, man, my Sunday collections in my church don't total enough to pay my liquor bills."

Miss Sally, naturally, doesn't enthuse over this reverend father, but would have to attend his church, I believe, were it not for the fact that she has her own properly blessed and sanctified chapel within the house at Magnolia, and thus is able to side-step one law of church domain, and so entice priests from Melrose to come to say Mass and give her communion. As has been observed before, there is more than one way to skin a cat....

The incoming mail today was not extensive, - a letter or two from friends of the "Adam's", something from Mary Rhodes, I believe, but that's about all, - and I have ~~never~~ read none of it as my secretary and his impending bride had to go to Natchitoches, - probably to see about a marriage license, for, to my surprise, I believe, they are actually going to have a service performed. Mr. Brew confided to me yesterday that he had decided he would go to some local deacon to have the knot tied, and invite no one to the service, letting the deacon's wife and son act as witnesses. But immediately after the ceremony, he and his bride would return to "Dad's", - Dad being Fugabou's Mama, where there would be a little party. I believe the ceremony may be planned for this Sunday when I am scheduled to dine with the Kands, but in case of conflict, I shall of course attend the doings in "Dad's" cabin. So far as I can remember, this is the only instance I know of wherein a grandmother bore the nickname of "Dad". I suppose it came about because Mr. Brew's mama wouldn't accept the marriage proposals of Mr. Brew's father, and so with two women only in the house, Mr. Brew grew up calling his Mother "Mama" and his grandmother "Dad". What a business.

One nice thing about January is that it always brings around the Wild Life stamps, and I hope you don't mind if I concentrate them from day to day on you....

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Friday, January 7th, 1949.

Memorandum: A lovely day with little time to appreciate it.

Yucca had to have a pretty thorough going cleaning, following much doings by dusky plumbers, re-adjusting the butaine outlets. I took the opportunity, in sympathy with the commotion, to bring a little order out of the chaos resulting from too much stuff piled up around the place, - all kinds of things from chairs and tables to correspondence files, rescued from destruction from the whirlwind broom-swinging at Melrose. A half dozen houses the size of Yucca would not be too big to easily hold many an object which is likely to be cast away if the destroyer's hand is not blocked by anticipation, and so the packing and folding and tucking away that engaged too much of my time today constituted time and energy well spent, perhaps, but it certainly was tiresome, and particularly so as I was itching to get to Arenbourg and do a million things.

But I contented myself by making one short round. Uncle Or passed by Yucca to tell me a cow had jumped the fence from Alfred's basse-cour and was browsing on the terrace. Something, of course, had to be done about that, and so I dropped everything here and did what was required at Arenbourg.

Five minutes before supper time, I jumped into a hurried bath, and just as the supper bell rang, two ladies blew in, - Miss Sally's daughter and daughter-in-law. Her daughter, Mrs. Atala Nolde of Washington, had come up from Magnolia where she is vacationing, to pay me a little visit, and Mrs. Mathew Hertzog (Dee), accompanied her. They declined supper, and so I turned them loose at Yucca while I joined "A." at the board, for I don't like the idea of him eating alone.

Both ladies remained until long after the moon had flooded the white garden, and I was frankly glad when they had gone, I was so sleepy.

Besides, they are both rather on the dull side.

3379

But, as it has turned out, my day wasn't quite finished, for three or four people from the plantation came to enlist my assistance or borrow my ear for one thing or another. Little Mlam's new baby needed medical attention, and I accompanied him to his cabin to see what was up before calling the lady doctor. Obviously the baby had either over eaten or was not digesting its food successfully and so I fiddled around with the thing, removing it from its flat-on-the-back position beside its mother in the bed, and holding it for a while in an upright position, its little black head over my shoulder. Shortly the gas on its stomach, plus some of the milk it had over-eaten, came up. After a couple of squawks, it nestled its head against my neck and went to sleep. I thereupon deposited it back along side its mother again, and with calm and confidence restored to the young father and mother, I flew back home to have a go at the mail.

But on my gallery I found Little King awaiting me. He plans to get married next week and wanted to ask me about two or three things relative to that business, - all of which, come to think of it, is hilarious enough, - a bachelor giving advice to the love lorn and taking a hand in setting babies back to normalcy.

An hour after Little King had departed, Peter tapped at my door. He was a little high, but pleasantly so, and was lonely, I guess, and probably wanted a glass of wine. He got the latter, and told me many of his little troubles and, gradually, was switched around to concentrating on some of his successes in handling a tractor, and we ended up by agreeing that tomorrow he should be up bright and early to plough the Arenbourg drive, the terrace and unit No. 2, using the proper attachment on the tractor that will turn the soil upside down, thus exposing the roots of the weeds to the sun and to the frost, if one should chance to pass this way.

And so ran out the day, and among other things, the mere reading of the program must be mighty dull.

As a matter of fact, I feel pretty dull myself, and I am impeded by a lame finger I cut on my razor, which tends to slow up my antics on this keyboard.

And I'm afraid the enclosures are no more entertaining than this Memo. Betty Regard is Celeste's former sister-in-law, who when living in Watchitoches, secured the Reading Machine for me. Her re-marriage appears highly successful, and her late husband's mother is crazy about her daughter-in-law's new husband, which is nice and different....

3380

Sunday, January 9th, 1949.

Memorandum:

A marvelous day, Springlike and balmy.

A curious twist in the social order induced me to forego attending the wedding of my secretary, but as a substitute, I dined ever so pleasantly with the Rands.

Mr. Brew's bride, one Louisa Peace, is a sister of Sam Brown's wife, and it was in the Brown menage that the wedding took place. During the past couple of years, Sam Brown has stolen so much from the big house and from Yucca on occasion that it would have embarrassed him and his wife had I assisted at the nuptials, - a thought which occurred to me but late yesterday at the store where I saw Sam and found him ever to jittery at the prospect of my presence at the Sunday wedding. Sur to the curious set up at Melrose during the past few years, when Sam Brown was successfully pulling the wool over the Madam's eyes and Dan's, nothing could be done about eradicating him from Melrose. Now that his tenure of service has ended, his disturbing influence has gone, too, and it seemed to me that the kindest thing I could do for my secretary was not to create a rift in the frolic which would most certainly have resulted, had I suddenly appeared amongst all the plunder in the Brown household.

Accordingly when Ed Rand appeared this morning to say I would be expected at the camp for one o'clock dinner, I accepted. It wasn't a large gathering, but sufficiently ample to arrange two tables, one on the gallery over Cane River, and one at the other end of the house. I guess there were a dozen or 15 people when we sat down, and if everyone ate half as much as I did, they must have felt like several dozen before finishing. The resistance piece was barbecued goat, with much potato salad, deviled eggs, avocado stuffed with some very special stuff, its identity entirely eluding me, and a flock of grand jellies, olives and pickles, celery, a couple of kinds of cheese, pies and chocolate cake, with punch and Coca-Cola with the food and a marvelous brew of coffees afterwards. Maude Pattison, Mrs. Gordon Randolph and Nathalie Scott graced the board where I found myself. The surface of the river, in spite of the balmy breeze, was pure blue and but slightly rippled. It was too warm to wear a coat. And long before our table had finished, a note of entertainment was added to the scene by Corance Rand going down to the margin of the river, just below us, and pulling out a few splendid bass, apparently with no effort at all. That particular note somehow lent itself harmoniously with tales Nathalie had to tell of life in the silver mining region of Mexico some years back, - both the stories and the local setting seemed so off the beaten track.

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Back home by three, I had no sooner arrived than a flock of people, - some graduate students from the Watchitoches college, a some of the faculty, arrived. I was quite along, what with not a Henry on the place, which somehow seemed odd, for long have I hurried Sunday pilgrims on their several ways, what with the Madam at such times usually having been waiting to chat a while with me. But today there was no hurry, and what with all the food under my belt, I felt inclined to exert myself but leisurely in the entertaining department. Before the dozen or so collegians had departed, some of the people who had been at dinner dropped in, and before they had departed, some others came, and so the afternoon unravelled. I had envisioned getting a little reading done this afternoon, but night came on before I had sped the last guest, and turned to feed my animals.

I'm a little sleepy tonight, but I did stay awake, what with working on my long beard, while Fred Allen was doing his number.

But I think I shall do little else tonight, save responding to the two enclosed letters, which wont take long. I don't know how I shall handle the Hamilton letter, but possibly shall see if the University of North Carolina may not be able to provide us with some excellent transcripts of some of their rare Watchitoches items in exchange for some of the Isaac Erwin material which they have long sought. Usually Chapel Hill on receiving original manuscripts provides a transcript copy of the same for each member of the family whence the material comes. But as none of the Henrys care anything about the Erwin papers, and since we already have a typed copy of the extensive diary, perhaps some other typed material might be in order.

As for Mary Rhodes' letter, it certainly reveals a tired and tried soul. I smiled as the first two paragraphs were read to me, for the complaint in the first line is followed, as I recall, by a tacit admission that she recognizes her own correspondence as being in arrears.

I mustn't fail to mention a gift Mrs. Rand brought me, - being a group of dolls, - six, seated on a mourners bench. They are colored people, gayly gowned and gotten up, - 1st a gay blade leaning back and making eyes and a bag three seats down the bench, then a 2nd figure, sedate and frumpish and respectable, - 3rd, an old man weighted down with grief, and a high silk hat on his knee, 4th, the strumpet making eyes at the gay blade, - 5th a spinster and dried up emotionally, while the final figure is an old, old lady, leaning forward a little and supporting a hearing aid. I have them facing my reverend udly, and I like the whole business, both for their gaiety and for their sentiment.

But here I am run out, and so shall fold, hoping that you had as happy but a less active Sabbath....

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Monday, January 14th, 1949.

Memorandum:

In Shreveport it is supposed to have been cold and sleeting all day. But at Melrose it has been another sunny, balmy day, too warm for a jacket, and tonight a nice fat placid moon is meandering across the unclouded heavens.

We don't need any of the sleet from a hundred miles to the north of us, but a lower thermometer reading would be helpful for retarding things a little at Arenbroug, and slowing up the Chinese magnolias at Melrose, many of which are already beginning to burst into bloom, and most certainly are going to get caught by Jack Frost before the month runs out.

There was a fairly heavy mail today, but little of any particular interest. Sister wrote, saying any time I would drop her a line or telephone her, she would drop every thing and drive down and take me home with her. A Shreveport Mayor, while visiting Melrose, once remarked to the Madam if she would only come up to the city, he would send a car for her any time she desired. What seemed a little tart by way of response, she allowed as how transportation was the least of her worries. I felt like quoting Mother to daughter on this point.

But I mustn't forget to mention another point Sister touched on. For no particular reason, apparently, she took occasion to remind me that the Madam's birthday fell on January 13th, during this week. That was news to me, for the Madam and I always celebrated it on January 14th, but during the Madam's life time, Sister never remembered even what month the natal day arrived, - and usually I was sufficiently mean not to remind her of it. And so now the worm turns and sets to reminding me, - and of all times, on the wrong date.

My secretary didn't show up today, but I saw him in the big road this noon, heading with his bride on foot toward the Melrose Social Club. I reckon the "moon moth", as Mattie calls the honey moon, will probably be over about tomorrow or next day. And speaking of the wedding and Mattie, I was enchanted when she referred to the little reception planned for yesterday

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following the wedding ceremony, and she employed a perfectly good old word which I haven't heard used in years, although in ante bellum circles it was in ordinary useage, and still comes to the surface in the language of the untutored. The word, meaning a reception of some kind, is "infare", although I don't know how it is spelled, but it may be as I have spelled it above. I think it is a nice word, and I must include it in my vocabulary. Should you ever run across the word in old Noah Webster's fine handbook, you would be conferring a favor on me by indicating the spelling.

After going to bed fairly early last night, I awoke and read for a while, delving into John Gunther's account of the status of the negro in the South, which appears as a kind of preface to his section dealing with the States South of the Mason-Dixon line. I found his appraisal excellent, and sufficiently cogent to make many a professional Souther fume and damn forever henceforth at the mention of "Inside U. S. A." I was interested to learn that Mississippi has something over 40 per cent negro population while Louisiana has 37 per cent. But as the author points out, percentages by States don't give a very concise picture of a racial concept of any community in the State, since some towns, - perhaps some counties or parishes almost, may have nothing but hill billies, while other regions may have the reverse. Surely the river counties of Mississippi, and especially Adams and Wilkinson (Woodville area) must be very heavily over-balanced with the darker side of the human strain, while on Cane River in this area, where the nearest white people live either in the Permuda neighborhood or at Magnolia, we whites are out-numbered a hundred to one by people of color, I suppose. One thing I am grateful for, - that the settlement of racial relations on an harmonious basis will never be accomplished in my life, for when the hill billies and the negroes suddenly begin hitting it off together, then there will not be the exclusive concentration of color in any particular area any more, and I should certainly feel unhappy to awaken some morning to discover a flock of poor white trash had moved from the Ozarks to Cane River.

Aurellia fluttered in ax in a panic this morning, having just discovered that many children in the neighborhood are having the measles, - Ezra's children, Dean Mack's and so on. She was fearful that Bessie's baby might be the next on the list, and I told her I hoped so, - which set her back a bit. But it seems that neither Aurellia nor Bessie have had the thing either, and I guess they are pretty old to enjoy the thing much. It seems to me that there may be some kind of an anti-measle serum, and I shall call Dr. Knipmayer about it in the morning. And I must make a round to the cabins of friends and admonish them about too much light in the sick rooms, - which will probably be singing psalms to a dead mule, but I'm bound to do it regardless. Last year one of my friends, - 18, had measles and picked cotton the while wearing glasses of slightly tinted shade to ward of the 111

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Tuesday, January 11t, 1949.

Memorandum:

What a marvelous night, the moonlight so luminous, the air so warm, - how much you would love it all.

Good old Dora and I have just returned from a little stroll on the terrace of Arenbourg. Our old friend, the mocking bird, hailed us from his perch in the old cottonwood, but didn't accompany us to the gate tonight. But I don't blame him for retaining his high vantage point, for Cane River must look unusually lovely from where he sits, and besides, he probably knows that I am all in favor of him maintaining his situation until another dawn vies with tonight's moon and I shall be fortified with a spade that will turn up sufficient earth to provide him with a mighty breakfast of fat worms.

I accomplished quite a lot this morning, both at Arenbourg and at Melrose, but the afternoon didn't amount to much, - too many people to take up my time.

Among other people passing this way was Mrs. Coombs from the Watchitoches Welfare office, to pick up my old reading machine, which has been awaiting her arrival, - fortunately, - for a week or so. And I say fortunately, because my new machine completely played out last night, and wouldn't so much as make a peep. I therefore unboxed the old machine and put the new one in the carton, which has now gone on its way to Baton Rouge for overhauling while, curiously enough, the old one, which I thought had fizzled out completely, seems to have taken a new lease on life, and appears to be better than ever.

Once I experienced the same phenomenon with my grandfather clock which apparently got tired and refused to respond to any of my coaxing or that of the local repair man. And so I just let the thing sit for five or six months, and then one day gave the pendulum a lick, and the old clock struck out at a merry pace without stopping for years. If only my old reading machine will do half as well.....

In a roundabout way today I learned there is to be a meeting of the executives of the Rural Electrification Administration in New York, - on a national level, comprising many of the top executives through out the country, - the conclave scheduled for either the last week in January or the first week in February, - or both. I also learned that J. A. has asked x to Celeste to

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accompany him and that madam Regard will visit her daughters in Mansura, La., during their absence. It seems that a special coach will be provided for executives in this area, and the trip will be made via Niagra Falls, etc., which seems to suggest a honeymoon special of some kind, but I don't know why.

Immediately on learning of these plans, I began fixing up my own calendar for that period, chistling of the jaw permitting. For there are several things demanding my attention in town, which I should like to attend to without the aid and comfort of local assistance, and I might as well take time out to call on a few friends in town, have dinner with the Worsleys, etc., and thus, by absenting myself from here for a little, give the place itself a little vacation.

I shall shortly learn of further particulars about the schedule of the R. E. A. people in Manhattan, which, I imagine, will not be long. If you long for quiet half as much as I imagine you may, after such a busy season, you probably won't care about getting tangled up with Celeste, but I'll give you the particulars when they come to hand, and if you want to, you may do as the impulse dictates at the moment, and as I shall not mention the matter to Celeste, you may surprise her or not as you please. I apologize for the curious construction and expression in the above sentence, but I was distracted while writing it, as I realized how much more intimately you are acquainted with Melrose and all its people than poor Celeste is.

My secretary came by to see me tonight, and he volunteered nothing about the Sunday festivities, and I asked nothing. Neither did I tell him that I have discovered one or two other youths from the little river area who can sometimes assist me in a pinch, - and I am glad to find myself possessed of such knowledge. But I am a little depressed about one of the youths, - age 15, - who obviously has an unusually fine mind and who wanted to go further with his studies than the local school afford, but is unable to do so because of family burdens. It is circumstances such as these coming to mind that make me wish I had some of the excess Ferriday Byrnes or Henry money which it seems to me, could be expended to such great advantage. There is no need for me to recall how Barnett Kane got four or five thousand dollars out of Rosenwald while enjoying a good income both from books and teaching, while this poor little colored boy can't get through high school for lack of a few hundred dollars.

A discussion of measles turned up early this morning when Aurellia arrived with her hair down her back. I inquired about the reason for this somewhat unexpected note, and she explained that her mama said that she wouldn't get the measles if she didn't put her hair up during the fulling of the moon. Mine is down, too, so perhaps I will also escape.....

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Wednesday, January 12th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The radio continues to speak of sleet storms bearing down heavily on the Dallas-Denton-Fort Worth area, breaking down trees and behaving outrageously generally, but, - and I pause to knock wood, - the thermometer in this region maintains its readings from the 50's to the 70's, - and I like it. I hope Rudolph's fine shrubs and bushes aren't getting mashed down too badly.

Among today's visitors were Deborah Abramson and Lois Lester, who drove in unannounced around 9:30 this morning. It was good to see them. They were on their way to Mansfield, La., where Lois was to lecture on Audubon this afternoon, and as that place is somewhere south or south west of Shreveport, they couldn't remain for lunch.

But we had a pleasant sitting at Yucca, comparing notes on life in Louisiana generally. Neither of them had heard from Essae Mae recently, - for she seems to be pretty busy in Oakland, California, where her sister is quite ill. I believe Essae Mae plans to return to Baton Rouge at the end of the month. But there was some talk about a jaunt to Chicago during the winter, too, and possibly she goes by the Windy City on her way back from the coast. In any event, she is a lady who gets around, I must say.

From the enclosure, you will note that the former citizen of "atchez enjoyed the Butler opus. Strangely enough, I never think of him as being born and bred there, even though I know his father and his sister well enough in that setting. Isn't it curious how completely some souls escape the seal of their birth and dwelling place while others bear it stamped all over them, no matter how long they may live in totally different environments.

Before folding up last night, I read an account of the Tennessee Valley Authority in "Inside U. S. A." and found it more illuminating than anything else on that subject that has come to hand. In the article, he points out that the whole project received wide attention in Europe, and I got the impression that London papers, for instance, heralded the undertaking and progress of the undertaking more than many

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American papers. Having been out of the press for a decade, I would have no means of judgement on such a point, although from all the chatter on the radio about the business, I gather that squabbles in congress and pot-shots by politicians and power combines alike, both intended to scuttle the project and injure the individuals connected with it, may have tended to becloud the subject for American readers. It is interesting that Mr. Gunther thinks R. V. A. may be the greatest monument to the New Deal that will exist in years to come, and he styles it a child of Senator Norris and of F. D. R.

I also finished his impressions of the status of the negro in the South, and found it excellent. If he omitted anything that might be considered a cardinal point in the matter, it might be that he didn't stress the fear many people used to have, - and I suppose the fear has been handed down in some quarters, - that if given the vote, the negro might be guided by unscrupulous carpet-baggers who would put the State governments into a shambles like those existing in Reconstruction days. The fact that the person of color has had such a poor chance to get an education during the past 80 years tends to project the possibility of unusually corrupt handling of the vote, should they be completely enfranchised in areas where they are so greatly in the majority. Perhaps the best proof of this assumption is to be found right here in Louisiana where the white trash, so widely bereft of brains, but possessed of the right to vote, are just the ones who make possible, - and inevitable, such monstrosities as Earle Long, old Ralmadge, Thurman and the like, - and I doubt if the negroes by their vote could do much worse.

My grapevine reports that a strange business, as between colored and white, accounted for much of the scuffling as between Peter and Uncle Lewis on Saturday night. My secretary tells me that Reddy Aranowski gave Peter a pint of whiskey along about first dark, - a hand-out that seems extraordinary, if one didn't know that the white clerk sometimes casts eyes of yearning at Peter's Maybelle. And how Uncle Lewis and Peter got entangled, the word alone knows, but it is interesting that the mix-up had a contributing factor in the white man's doings. And it is equally interesting the Reddy's wife called up Melrose Sunday morning to inquire if her husband was alright, as he had not been seen Saturday night in the neighborhood of Bayou Natchez where they live. I gather, as many a writer has suggested in the past, that much of the negro problem is a primarily a white problem.

Dora's reference to the Natchez lady concerns Madam Beaumont and her Journal wherein she says: I returned home from my store in Woodville and that night, Lo! I gave birth to a daughter." Locally, Elmer of Ink-Ausage and Paris Green fame, found on awakening the other day that she had given birth to a fine health child during the night. Oh, shades of Twilight sleep.....

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Thursday, January 13th, 1949.

Memorandum:

When I dated this letter "Thursday", I did so instinctively, but in spelling out the word, it seemed to me that dawn of Thursday was something that arrived days back. And yet I don't know why the interval between then and now should have seemed so distant, except that there were perhaps more visitors today than usual.

I was enchanted with the postman today when he brought me the December Talking Books Topics, and I have stewed and fumed from then until half an hour ago when I had at last found time to run through it. There seem to be a number of items that I shall want to read: - Secretary Byrnes' "Speaking Frankly", Middleton's "These Things Are Mine"; William Scheirer's "End of a Berlin Diary", and so on.

They are also making books in French available for American readers now. I have already received Montesquieu's or is it Montesquieu's. I always get the 17 and 19th century gentlemen mixed up: - "Les Lettres Persannes", and a number of other items are just released, including Les Chouans by Balzac, Dominique by Fromontin, Zadig by Voltaire and so on. These are all read by Robert Franck, who is on the staff of The Voice of America, - which I suppose is the State Department broadcasting unit, - and it is he who read the edition of "Du Cote de Chez Swann" that I read last summer.

Among the books reviewed was Proud Destiny, and curiously enough, the reviewer brought his account of the book to a close by pointing out how effective was the final scene, - Dr. Franklin slowly descending the staircase at Versailles, casting his shadow over the snow laden steps. That staircase is going to be the death of me.

Dr. Knappmayer came by as usual and we had a pleasant chat, although he had little news of interest. Momentarily the health of the parish seems pretty good. He asked me to accompany him through the bamboo hedge to call on his patient, Nancy Balthazar who lives beyond a piece in the cotton patch. Mainey was in bed, and apparently very weak. Dr. K. gave Mme. Balthazar some sedative sufficient to last for a week, and sedatives the poor man needs for the progress of malignant growth, - in his stomach, is rapid. On our way back through the Melrose gardens, the doctor told me he would not be here next week as he has to take his daughter to Phrevoport to have her tonsils removed. My thoughts naturally

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returned to the patient we had just left, and as the pains are bound to increase, he most certainly will stand in the greatest need of some opiate before the two weeks have elapsed before the doctor returns. The doctor agreed that this was so, but explained that he felt it unwise to give more sedatives than would last for a week, since neither the husband or wife are of the type that would use much judgement in such matters. Accordingly I begged the doctor to let me take over during his absence, and so I am now fortified with sufficient drugs to ease Maincy along for a fortnight, and this afternoon I passed by to tell Mme. Balthazar to call me within the next 5 or 6 days, should her husband appear to be worse or in great pain. The halt leading the blind is one thing, but the blind dissing out narcotics is another, and as one old plantation would remark, so ust I echo: "You're a sight."

At the store this noon, I was struck w, when seeing J. H., how much he appeared on the defensive. In a minute or two I discovered what was up. He volunteered the information that since there was nothing in the field for a couple of the men to work at this afternoon, he had told Sam Brown and another man to trim the crepe myrtles in the Melrose gardens. I merely smiled and asked him if he had given them directions as to where to trim them. He said he had, and explained the points he had made. Then I smiled again, and quoting his mother to him, remarked: "Anything you do is alright, - but don't do it."

Knowing what a scamp Sam Brown is, J. H. amazes me by turning him loose in the gardens again, - once he has been eliminated so long. Within half an hour, when passing through the big house, I saw Sam Brown poking about in the ice box. Naturally I shoo-ed him out of the house, but so far as lifting a finger or giving a sign of approval or disapproval so far as his gardening methods were concerned, I put the line fence between Melrose and Arenbourg between us and went merrily about matters of much more concern to you and me than the crepe myrtles of Melrose.

Again the weather man predicted cloudy skies with occasional showers for today, but again he was wrong, for there has been a beautiful blue dome overhead all day, and not the slightest suggestion of rain from any quarter. I am hoping Rudolph is getting thawed out, although a man at the store today told me that yesterday he drove to Shreveport to meet a friend arriving on the train from Dallas, and he was surprised to see the engine and cars all encased in ice an inch or more thick. If that ice will only keep heading toward Oklahoma or Arkansas and just pass us by.

It seems to me that this winter I have heard fewer reports on the radio covering weather conditions in Europe this season. I find my thoughts turned in that direction so frequently. Let us hope they are not getting California snowstorms or Texas freezes, but just good old Louisiana mildness on this go-round....

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January 14th, - Friday, 1949.

Memorandum:

How grand to have your air mail in this morning's post.

I opened it at once, and want to thank you for your characteristic thoughtfulness in advising me that nothing of a pressing nature was enclosed within its elegantly long pages.

And so I have locked it away in my annoir for tomorrow's sitting. My secretary came by today on schedule, but it seemed better for me to deny myself the pleasure of running through your letter, I should devote myself exclusively at the noon hour to a visitor at the big house, - a totally unexpected one, and one whom knowledge of her unpredictableness scarcely enabled anyone to anticipate her visit. As you have already guessed: - it was Sister.

J. H. sent me word at 11 o'clock that she had just telephoned from town, saying she would be here at noon. I was glad to be warned ahead of time, although in this particular instance there was nothing to be done about it, and so I merely went ahead supervising gardening in the neighborhood of the big house until the bag blew in. She brought Nina McInness with her, and the latter told me she hadn't dreamed of getting down this way before 9 o'clock this morning when Sister had telephoned her. Had I been Nina, I should have demurred. But Nina, although alright, hasn't had so much experience with Sister, and she accordingly responded to her impulse to get down this way to visit Melrose again and to make a sketch of the big house, to which she devoted her stay while here. Both ladies took off for home again at 3:30 this afternoon.

Dinner went along perfectly, with the two loadies being present, the two clerks from the store, Raynie and me. I was perfectly enchanted all during dinner, for Sister refused to speak to Raynie, and to volunteer a peep until after Raynie had left. She is such a fool to alienate those from whom all she wants, - money, - depends.

Of course she did much pump-priming of me for dirt, - and got precisely nothing. The vindictiveness is so great that she can easily be swirled from waiting for a response to her question if one will but toss in the mere name of any of her brothers, and especially one of those whom she particularly loathes. She didn't seem to be

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so very angry at J. H., nor did she mention Joe Henry whom she hates with the greatest venom usually. Today it was the General for whom she was gunning in particular, - and Dan, J. H., Raynie and Dan were at supper tonight, and I think Sister's stock didn't rise any on the strength of her visit.

She continues to feel very sorry for herself and mixes up her self pity with such lies that the combination is a curious brew indeed. For instance, she swore to me that the only reason she came down here today was because of her affection for me. She rattled off other particulars, and especially one about the matter of her mother's breast pin which was just too fantastic for words.

All in all, I think it was not a particularly profitable day for her.

I got quite a kick out of her comments as we walked through the house together. She asked me if I would accompany her, and at every step found something to find fault about, - too much furniture in this room, not enough in that, - too many books on one bookshelf, not enough on another, - and so on and so forth. Her assumption was that either her brothers or her sisters-in-law had supervised putting the house in order, and so grabbed at every wisp to point out how badly everything had been carried out. I got a huge kick out of the whole performance. And, I may add, was altogether delighted when I had seen the last of her. If she never comes back again, it will be altogether too soon.

But there were other sides to the day, pleasant sides, such as the advent of your letter and its assurance that I shall have a chat with you through its medium on the morrow. And then, the day being what it was, I took occasion to call up many of the madam's friends in town and in adjoining parishes, and it was good thus contacting them.

The madam's room was rather gay today, too, for I gathered a couple of armfuls of these magnolias early this morning, and they gave a pleasant note in her room, both in design and in fragrance. She would have liked them, had she been here, even though no one else noticed them. And after all, I simply had her in mind when surcharging her chamber with their glory, and the freshness of her memory was all that mattered.

In today's post, there were letters from Robina, Kate Perkins, Mrs. Lake and so on, none of which will I get to read until the morrow.

Nothing tells me I shall not get around to do any reading from Gunther tonight, although I should like to, being in the midst of the chapter on Mississippi and Louisiana. In the latter bracket, he refers to the Cajuns, being the French of South Louisiana swamp country as Latin hilly-billies, which is perfect, and I'm sorry I had never thought of that designation, - it is so perfect.....

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January 16th, 1949 (Sunday)

Memorandum:

It was grand to have your letter

It goes without saying that I am sorry you had such a pile of work awaiting you on your return to the office, following such a busy New Year's. And what a pity so many unpleasant things fell to your lot during that so-called holiday. How noble of you to have carried through the disagreeable and the arduous, but I urge you never to try to write when things are so pressing. You know I will always understand.

Thank Heavens you found some recompense in being comparatively alone for a little while, following the inception of the New Year, and even though business has been too exhausting to permit much fun at the close of day, still I am sure you found much satisfaction in being able to collapse on occasion alone, - which is really a grand thing, even if everything else is out of joint.

And as for your reaction to Tilloah's visit, I must say I am consumed with admiration. The fact that he called on you because he chanced to be in the neighborhood put me in mind of a statement made once in a while by some untutored friend of color who, in calling on me, remarks: "I didn't haven't nuthin' else to do, so I thought I'd pass around to see you".

And as for sticking to your guns and refusing the station island invitation, how right you are. Just as in the case of people who urge me to visit Sister, telling me I owe it to her, so I feel about your invitation to go to Tilloah's: - "I owe Sister and you owe Tilloah, - but Nothing."

From the enclosure, - Miss Kate's, - you will note she seems to think something on her part is due Sister in memory of her mother. I don't, except possibly a great big hand, - or foot. And as for the Charity, which all poor mortals undoubtedly deserve, I prefer to expend mine in some other direction. I realize the Bible admonishes us to love those who hate us, which is probably good advice, but even though this may be alright, I never heard a preacher say that God loves the devil, even though the latter be but a fallen angel.

So far as I am concerned, I believe I am better off in not attempting charity in Sister's or Tilloah's cases. All I want to do is just walk away and let them enjoy all the

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fruits of other people's charity. And may God have mercy on my soul, and theirs.

but turning to pleasanter things, may I thank you for telling me so many interesting particulars about what is going on, both across the street from you in the blazing apartment, - which both my secretary and I found altogether thrilling in reading your vivid account of the remarkable doings, and thanks, too, for acquainting me with the two publications mentioned in your letter. I think I shall ask the Library of Congress to put them both on Talking Book disks. I know of no negro anthology that has been recorded, and I should like to read one ever so much.

I am glad you told me about Sumner Wells, too, for, as so often happens in such instances, the radio dropped him completely before any account was given as to his recovery, - or hopes of the same. I am so glad no amputations were necessary.

As for the death of Dr. Carl Fisher, I hadn't heard of that event either. Naturally I got a huge kick out of the name given him by the Indians when he was adopted. La Teata was a friend of Mrs. Clifford Weaver of McKinney, Texas, and I may be able to get Frau Fischer's address from Dr. Weaver, although his wife died a short time ago, and I'm not sure if the friendship was maintained by the husband. I reckon I was in communication with you at the time the Princess Teata came to Melrose. She certainly was a beautiful woman, - rather like a sepia Garbo, and she had a striking personality, and pleasing withal. I have always wondered if Dr. Fischer was one of the characters in John Kieran's book on Nature Study, - I have forgotten the title. You may recall that in that volume he lists or mentions several people who shared his out of door enthusiasms with him, and I have always wondered if Dr. F. might not have been one of them.

How wonderful it is of you to keep me informed of all these matters for without your thoughtfulness, I would lose track of how the world does turn in so many quarters of genuine interest, and only you ever sense what these interests are, - and are kind enough to "lift up the lamp" for me.

I am enchanted that you bought yourself some nice warm fur boots, and even though the weather has been too warm for them temporarily, there will be ample opportunity to put them to use before Spring rolls round, I'm sure. And another reason I am enchanted that you have them is because I shall love my own jolly pantoufles the more just for realizing that their counter-part is serving you so nobly, too, when days are rough and stormy.

We have had a quiet week end, but ever so pleasant, with a splendid rain all day, and it seems much cooler tonight. Aren-bourg will profit mightily by both elements. Again thanks for your gran letter....

3394

Monday, January 17th, 1949.

memorandum:

It has drizzled all day long and I like it. And a chill east wind which I could have done without, kept the thermometer in the lower 40's. Tonight it will go down to the 30's, and not, I hope, "cook" the Chinese magnolias, so many of which are now in full flower.

I had occasion to go the store several times during the day and now once did I see anyone there but outlanders. Most of the colored folks must be busy chopping wood, - or burning it.

This morning early, however, I had more callers from the neighborhood that I would have, had the traffers been turning. The dark duke came by ever so early, - following a rough night, I suppose. But it is always good to see him, and among other things, I was impressed by the number of Italian words and phrases he still remembered following his stay in Modena in 1944 or 1945. I suppose it is always twice as impressive to hear a person who can't read a single letter toss off phrases in more than one language. The fact that the Army couldn't teach him his alphabet but the Italians could impress their language on his memory to last this length of time, and without having heard a word of the tongue in the interim, is something for students of the mind to figure out, for it is beyond me.

At long last, Beau Mack came by with his clippers, and although he was slightly on the high side, I let him cut my hair regardless, and I guess he about snatched me bald headed, for there seem to be curious open spaces above my ears and the somewhat astonished way the clerks looked at me at noon time led me to believe that my appearance is probably something that might easily frighten children.

Perhaps Beau was distracted because I had so many sitters during his performance in the tonsorial department, - Peter, Alam, Attrice and so on. But perhaps I saved them from being put through the same mill, for all of them demurred when the barber-tractor driver inquired if anyone else was of a mind to have their perruques worked on.

3395

Those charming but awfully quiet Gages of Austin came through with another gift today, - a book entitled "Two Romantics", - and I couldn't make out the author's name, but I suspect it may be about a lady and gentleman figuring prominently in the artistic development of Texas in the 1840's. I believe the lady, - and I'm ashamed I don't recall her name, was a German, coming directly from beyond the Rhine, either just before or just after the Revolution of 1848. She was a sculptress of merit, I believe, but I am woefully ignorant about her. Perhaps I shall have an opportunity to have someone tell me if this assumption as to the nature of the individual of the first party is correct. Unfortunately the Gages wrote my name in the book, - but perhaps only my first, so I am not sure if this would preclude perusal in your neighborhood or not.

This is the third gift I have received from the Gages in as many weeks, and although I always acknowledge them promptly and sometimes drop a line in between times, I never yet have ever had a line from either of them. Doesn't this strike you as something new in the realm of friendly relations, which, from the gifts, I take to be quite genuine.

Today's mail also included a letter in your familiar hand and one, I believe, from Rudolph, but my secretary must be remaining under a chip of wood today, for I have seen nothing of him. What with a rainy day and a new bride, I reckon he has ample excuse for not venturing out.

Last night, just before dark, I passed on the bridegroom's grandma, for Mr. Brew had asked me to come by to have a piece of cake. And so, in the dim glow of a somewhat wheeze fire, I got my first look at the new bride, who, as spectres go, seemed ever so nice, although the fireplace offered such scant illumination to the room that my concept was little more than a guess. I took along the bottle of Sherry which Nina had brought me the other day, and possibly that contributed to the waywardness of my errant helper today. Personally I don't care much about Sherry, - if Port be available, - and I am only hoping the groom didn't find it even less satisfactory than I usually do.

Somehow I can't give up one note of the holiday season even though the official time for putting away festive decorations is long past, and so my lovely pine cones on their gay red ribbon streamers continue to grace my desk lamp, while every glance in their direction eliminates 1500 miles at the bat of any eye lid. What happiness when such accomplishments can be attained by such a medium....

3396

Tuesday, January 18th, 1949.

Memorandum:

First off, let me apologize for having failed you in letting today's departing postman leave without yesterday's Memo, which no doubt will arrive in the same mail with this one. The truth is that I had to go to town early, and didn't get back until nearly 11 a.m., and so missed getting it to the office in time.

Upon my return I was glad to find Mr. Brew waiting for me so I could enjoy your kind note of yesterday, telling me of the Natchez article in the January issue - is that right, - issue of the National Geographic. The Madam's subscription, I suppose, ran out in December, and I imagine it was not renewed, as I haven't seen the current number. It certainly would be nice to have a copy for our collection on Natchez, but if you save yours, that will suit nicely for Arenbourg, so please, during these busy times, don't expend precious energy searching for an extra copy. I should be so much happier if you would devote that time to just relaxing.

It poured all night long and when J. H., Celeste and I drove to town this morning, the roads were ever so much like the same ones we traveled during the Madam's funeral, with vast stretches of them under water.

Your inquiry regarding my next go-round with the dentist is answered by today's doings, - and there will be a similar session a week hence. The gums were slit, chistle applied to the excess bone formations, the gums sewed up again and stitched, and here we are again, and it wasn't at all suggestive of the big misere that persisted so long in mid November. Apparently J. H. had communicated with the dentist yesterday, for he seemed to know that this kind of a job is never done in Natchitoches. It seems patients with this problem are invariably sent to Shreveport. And so just before we started, J. H. very kindly asked me if I wouldn't prefer to spend today and tonight in the Natchitoches hospital, following the operation. Of course I demurred, since there is no place like home, and especially when one feels like being alone.

I didn't get much news while in town alixxx although the dentist told me he had seen the lady doctor last Friday and thought she seemed terribly tired. I certainly hope she doesn't wear herself to a frazzle as she came so close to doing before. Celeste visited her on a professional matter, and told me

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she said she would get down this way to see me soon, but would come tonight if I needed her. I hurried to the telephone on hearing this to assure her I didn't need anything, for certainly she doesn't need a 30 mile trip under present circumstances.

Celeste dropped in to see this place along about 3 p.m. to see how I was making it, and I offered her a cookie which had arrived in a box from Texas. - I guess with Mrs. Betty Smedley's Christmas greetings, although I was under the impression it came with something from the Gages. Be that as it may, the enclosed card was pasted on the metal can containing the cookie, and on undoing the original wrapping, I had asked my secretary to read the card, which he had done, but hadn't torn it from its Scotch tap mountings, and so I had heard but one side of the thing, and had no idea as to the identity of the sender. And so, and certainly belatedly, I must acknowledge this gift, which I have pretty well finished off by this late date. Once I had thought of addressing a letter to Miss Brown Eyes of Texas, but then feared the envelope might come flying back for a better address. La belle Deiter certainly thought something up when she pasted the Christmas tag flat on the cookie jar, I must say. Nella Mae, or whatever her name is, but wouldn't she studied up something like that for somebody as blind as a bat. What a bat. - what a bag.

I guess there isn't much of interest in Deborah's or Caroline's letters. Deborah refers to having bumped me with her car when she was driving away the other day. In backing away from the side gate, somehow her right front wheel and my right leg got tangled up a little, but although my shoe lost its heel, I didn't get hurt a bit.

Ora Williams told me the other day how delightfully she had been entertained by the Abramsons in their home in Baton Rouge a few years ago. The Abramsons are Jews, of course, and Ora is a gentile. Ora said the food served at dinner was marvelous, so bountiful and so delicious, but she thought they quite outdid themselves, when as a special gesture to her, a platter of splendid pork chops was served for her own particular delectation, - along with the other excellent things, although the servant passed the platter to no one at table save Ora.

I am so glad the rains are so bountiful these days, for surely the Arenbourg children will be the better prepared for cold weather if it comes, and more amply supplied with water, should spring break through prematurely. Thanks again for telling me of the National Geographic article, "The Byrnes, etc.", and I can't imagine where the barbecue was held, but I'll find out....

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Wednesday, January 19th, 1949.

Memorandum:

It's mighty damp under foot, but overhead it has been all blue and gold, with the blue a little deeper tonight, and the glory of the sun scattered brilliantly through a myriad of stars. At first dark the thermometer was in the 40's, but according to report it will dip to 32 before morning, and if so, the Chinese magnolias will look like fried lettuce by tomorrow.

Dr. Eleanor telephoned this morning to inquire if I felt well enough to receive her this afternoon. I never felt better, which seems to surprise everyone, following yesterday's bout. And so she came down about 3, bringing Rosalyn Aswell with her, and I was glad to see them both. They brought me some anti-pain medicine and a bottle of wine, not being sure which would be most helpful under the circumstances. I am always glad to get the sedatives, for my own "patients" occasionally have need of the soothing grace of "Hoffman Pills", - and I imagine that before Dr. Knipmayer makes his next round a week from tomorrow, Mancey Balthazar, beyond the bamboo hedge, may have urgent need of about everything I can administer from my own hoarded stock.

Within half an hour from the time the ladies departed, I was able to put the contents of the bottle to work in a good cause, for first runy and then Clemence tapped on my door, after having spent too long in the wet orchards, "scrapping" pecanes. It was wonderful what the concerted heat from the bu aine and the bottle could do for them as a restorative.

Conversation with the Natchitoches ladies was pleasant although I heard nothing of especial interest. Dr. Eleanor, on Rosalyn's recommendation, had been trying to read M. Scott Fitzgerald's "Tender Is The Night" which Rosalyn finds very special and Dr. Eleanor hadn't found exactly fit suited for her own momentary frame of mind. I never have read the book so can give no opinion. I believe that Rosalyn, while married to Melvin Douglas, had known the Fitzgeralds, and it is possible that the book is sufficiently autobiographical to make it of greater interest with the reader who is acquainted with the author. Rosalyn casually remarked at one point of the conversation, - and I believe she was referring to the book, that "every masterpiece, of course, is an account of the disintegration of man", - tossing the statement off so casually that I was almost startled. While I am plunging around in the mud puddles at Arenbourg tomorrow morning, I shall

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find time, while pulling weeds, to contemplate this statement in relation to Mona Lisa, a couple of Mozart compositions, the Little Trianon, War and Peace a couplet from Shelly, A La Recherche du Temps Perdu, - and see how all these fit in with the lady's bland statement.

For what seemed like hours last night, but what actually was probably little more than minutes, - for I was but half awake, a ~~few~~ sound of footsteps up and down and up and down my back gallery disturbed my attempted slumbers. Finally I got up to investigate and discovered a half grown pig, - about as large as the airdale, was taking its constitutional on the gallery, so prettily sketched by Suydam in the Gilmore volume. It was a very friendly pig and seemed not at all frightened by my appearance in somewhat scanty garb. But I shooed him away regardless. Half an hour later he returned, and by that time I had become unreasonable. Fortified with a flashlight in one hand, a chunk of firewood in the other, I negotiated the back gallery clad in nothing more substantial than "mes jolis pantoufles". In the little room at the left of the gallery, I sensed his presence, but couldn't locate him, and accordingly I just heaved the block of wood hap-hazardly, and lo! made a perfect hit, - or at least, if not perfect, sufficiently close to some vital or sensitive spot as to make the poor pig squeal. But quite unexpectedly, this noisy porker leaped from where ever he had been, planting one cloven hoof on my ankle, and storming between my legs a fraction of a second later. It up-set me completely and I fell over an inverted rocking chair, dropping my flashlight which automatically went out. It didn't take me long to gather myself together and determine that I was still all in one piece, but my marauding friend, just to show how disdainful he was of me and all my strange actions, deliberately marched the whole length of the gallery, sniffing and grunting in the dark as he made his leisurely way out into the White Garden. Why I should have made such a fuss about one harmless pig, I can't imagine, and so far as my efforts went in providing quiet for my slumbers, I of course merely succeeded in rousing myself to complete sleeplessness. If my friend returns tonight, he will have to have his frolic without any companionship on my part, and if he returns the next night I shall get out my blunderbus and give him a broadside. Frankly I don't much like his propensity for rooting up narcissus and daffodill bulbs and chewing up young magnolias, but what makes it really bad is the fact that he seems to be a very friendly pig and secretly I have to admit to myself that I really rather like him.

I had supper with J. A., who tells me many a little politician is dissatisfied with Governor Long and the Governor with them. From another source, I learn that the K. E. A. junket will return from New York via Washington where it will pick up Senator Russell Long who will make the return trip to Louisiana with the local officials. Miss Sally's son permitted Governor Long to create him an honorary colonel, but J. A. is much too smart to permit any public indication of where he stands in regard to the present set-up. What a business....

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Thursday, January 20th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The weather is humid, cloudy and chilly, and just about right for the season, with a thermometer reading in the 40's to keep plants from developing prematurely. A heavy frost last night finished off those of the blossoming Chinese magnolias that just had to get too far out in front.

My day seems to have been fairly busy, but I can't say I accomplished much. Perhaps interruptions and demands from first one quarter and then another deprived me of sticking to any one thing long enough to make a particular line of endeavor amount to much.

The incoming mail was light. I was glad to see, however, that James F. Byrnes' "Speaking Frankly", came through from the New Orleans Library. I shall try reading a couple of pages before folding up, and am under the impression I shall like it.

In the pilgrim field, the same dampness discouraging road-running also slows up, if not halts, plantation operations, thus leaving negroes living in the more remote sections to journey up from the Little and Red River areas. Accordingly I have more visitors from that quarter, and correspondence increases in the form of letters to be dictated and composed in line with their impulses to attend to such matters while the tractors are resting in their sheds awaiting a drying up of the fields. Between 12 and one o'clock this noon, I knocked off epistles for Little King, Peter, Dee-dee, Little Robert, Attrice and Log, thus clearing the Underwood for responses to letters from various quarters from old friends of the Madam who had but recently learned of her death. Several of these were from good friends but infrequent visitors and some who never carried on a very brisk correspondence, and many of these asked for particulars covering her last two or three years. I am glad to write letters of this type, but am always glad when they are completed, realizing as I do that it may be six months

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or a year before a response is forth-coming.

In going through some old correspondence with Mr. New, I ran across the enclosure which, from the cancellation, would seem to suggest it may have been one of the few final letters reaching the Madam. I haven't re-read it, but assume it may have some reference in it to the domestic problem that was a-stir in the Bradford menage shortly before Roark's death. It may turn out to be of no interest at all, but in any case, I don't want it back.

What with one thing and another, I never did get around to hear the inaugural ceremonies, broadcast between 11 and 12 today, and I missed Lowell Thomas's report on the day's doings to-night. But I shall probably catch up with Mr. Truman's address and possibly some other side lights late tonight when undoubtedly several stations will re-broadcast them between 10:30 and midnight. From all reports prior to the beginning of today's ceremonies, the settings were made most lavish by opulent Republican appropriations of last summer, in anticipation of inducting one of their own flock into the White House today.

Interruption:

My secretary tapped on my window as I was writing the last sentence. He and his bride, it seems, had been exploring the Old Testament by the light of their fireplace, and arriving at a disagreement as to what one passage meant, the husband, to settle the matter, brought his Bible to me to read the chapter and to ask for my interpretation, - which I jotted down for him to take back to his bride. I hope nobody decides to have a baby or require medical attention about the time, after bathing, I get settled down for a round with the Byrnes opus, and even though my pig returns, I think I shall just let him do his marching undisturbed tonight.

And no sooner had I written the above than Don Worsley tapped at my door. He remained an hour and a half while the lady doctor was attending Madam Regard who has a cold. I accompanied him to the side gate on his way out but did not see anyone, for I was too full of an inclination to apologize for this no-account letter and terminate it before making it any worse, - and so Mr. Byrnes and a bath and thence to bed.....

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Friday, January 21st, 1949.

Memorandum:

How nice to find a letter awaiting me in this morning's post. And how good of you to give me so many interesting particulars.

From all you tell me about Aunt Ella, I think she must be a grand person. Not until you mentioned her close brush against Mrs. Roosevelt's party did I realize that Lady Eleanor had been in that neighborhood.

I am floored by the number of letters you had to get off for Europe. I certainly hope you will not try to send any in this direction when such demands are placed on you from other quarters. Always be assured that I shall understand, and be the happier in knowing you are conserving your strength for the things labeled "Must".

"Inside Washington" ought to be something worth reading, - when it comes out, and I am ever so grateful to you for advising me regarding this contemplated work. It seemed to me his sketches of various Senators in the book I have just read were especially good. His pen picture of Senator Robert Taft, for example, - a man who has always frightened me a little, was exceptionally fine. The few times I have heard Mr. Taft on the air has filled me with astonishment that a man whose somewhat ironic voice seemed to indicate he actually believed what he was saying could juggle figures around so marvelously and with such concealed chicanery that one almost believe in the man even though one hoped he knew he was lying, even though his intonation suggested that he really thought himself telling the truth.

Regarding the Fred Allen program, I am as one with you in feeling the first part of the half hour is invariably the best, and for that reason, I am always sorry when he cuts it short, - or some of the characters have their lines cut to such brevity. I like Titus Woody ever so much, Mrs. Neusbaum and so on. I heard the Charles Boyer program with Mr. Allen, and it was practically identical with one I had heard a year or two back. I used to like his skits called "Mountain Justice" or some such, when Mr. Allen played the role of a hill-billy judge, but he doesn't seem to do those any more.

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Madam Mega's cold seems to be improving, and so far as I know the R. M. A. junket leaves here about next Wednesday, the 26th, so it will probably not reach New York until after the return of the flying dutchman, - and in passing, may I congratulate you on that one, which, on reading in your last letter, made me roll on the floor.

I shall advise you of the schedule covering the Manhattan interlude, but I shall say nothing here about having done so. Accordingly if circumstances permit, - and if you feel inclined, - you can attempt a contact. You understand perfectly, of course, that I don't care a whit if you do or not, and I merely mentioned the fact that the journey was in the offing, so that if you cared to, and chance permitted, you could take a gander at the set up if you cared to do so.

It has rained all day, and what with the thermometer in the upper 40's and lower 50's, it is just the thing we need to make up for lost time last summer.

Jan was extremely disagreeable to Aurellia last night at supper time, - she gives supper on Thursday's, to give the cook the afternoon off, and what with her departure from the big house in tears last night, plus the fact that it was raining this morning, I wasn't surprised she failed to appear today, quite aside from the fact that she had a cold to start with. Measles are all up and down the river, and I suppose about the next thing will be that she and Bessie and the baby will be down in bed all at the same time. I assume Aurellia must be around 30, and if so, she certainly should have the good sense not to avoid measles much longer.

I read a little from Mr. Byrnes' Speaking Frankly last night and liked it. Much of the beginning, after surveying the functional operations of the Government in Washington, goes into an account of the Yalta Conference, many excerpt from Mr. Byrnes' own stenographic notes taken at the time being quoted. Mr. Byrnes gives one to understand that Mr. Roosevelt was obviously ill before he started out from Washington for the Crimea. He further reminds one that while Mr. Roosevelt did apparently give "Uncle" Joe some "I.O.U.'s" at that time, we must keep in mind that the war on both ends of the axis was still going full tilt with no one able to anticipate how long the conflict might last. Mr. Byrnes feels that F. D. R. was thinking in terms of saving soliders and civilians when he bargained with Stalin to throw in the military machine of the Soviets to bring the Asiatic fighting to an earlier conclusion. The book is rather dry, but I like it. Lord, Lord, already at the end of this Memo and seemingly just getting started. Again my thanks for you nice, nice letter..

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Sunday, January 23rd, 1949.

Save for the light of the stars, I am writing in the dark.

Last night the Watchtowers radio announced that the current would be cut off from 8 o'clock Sunday morning until 1 in the afternoon, to permit some re-adjustment in mechanical operations.

But no current came through at 1 o'clock, and the same absence obtained at 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Neither my radio nor my reading machine are much good without electricity, but this old Underwood seems to jog along pretty well without it.

The day has been unusually warm, with a lovely balmy breeze blowing straight from the Gulf. I suppose it will cool off later tonight, but now, an hour or so after dark, all my windows and doors are wide open and except for the date line, one would suppose it a night in April or September.

I had a nice week end, without too many pilgrims and just enough callers to interrupt too prolonged attention to gardening yesterday and concentration on this machine today.

Today has been fair and a little humid, following yesterday's clouds and occasional sprinkles. It was dark-dark last night when I folded up a little after 10, and I must say I was gently surprised when someone tapped at my door an hour later, and on opening, I found three of my little friends, around 9 or 10, who had been to the movies and on their way home, had conceived the idea of paying me a surprise visit. Now those children managed to scramble through the bamboo hedge without getting entangled, is more than I can imagine.

Two of the children were enjoying their first frolic after having been down with the measles, and so had missed visiting me for a couple of weeks. We rustled about and found some cake and some Coca-Cola to renew their inner man, and they had much to tell me about local doings in their own particular world. I was certainly glad they stopped by, but I don't need to start a mid night kindergarten on Saturday nights. But then, people have measles but once, I reckon, and celebrations of this nature don't occur too often.

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Aurellia hasn't returned to work, and I am beginning to wonder if she is coming back. Mr. Brew is of the opinion she will. I hope he is right for it will not be easy to find another servant so capable and honest. If I were Aurellia, I most certainly wouldn't return, but she is longer on suffering than most people and possibly she doesn't mind the animosity of one member of the family as much as I resent it for her.

J. H. tapped at my door while I was on the last line. He couldn't figure out how I could be running a typewriter in the dark. The Madam used to say that J. H. doesn't realize yet that my vision isn't too perfect. He wanted me to have supper at his house, and although I wasn't hungry I walked over with him to sample some imported sardines, some excellent imported cheeses etc. We were just J. H., Celeste, Adam Regard and Dan, with the latter in his most affable mood.

A conversation the other day with one of my youthful negro friends brought up a comparison I hadn't heard before. The youth was describing someone's appearance, - it chanced to be a mulatto, and the boy said:

"He was pretty bright and had a gander eye and pretty straight hair".

The bright part is common language in these parts, meaning light in color, but the "gander eye" is something new, and does not suggest, I believe, the slang expression indicating curiosity. I never believe in asking the speaker what he means by an odd phrase or an unusual word, for it tends to cut short his complete relaxation and naturalness. And so I must stir myself on the morrow and see if I can't catch up with some of the ganders floating on the surface of cane river to determine what the feature of their eye may be that lends itself to human comparison. I believe the eye of a goose is yellow, but it is possible the gander's may be pale blue, although I have never before thought about it or remarked upon it. And perhaps it doesn't refer to color at all, but merely the shape or its sharpness, but whatever it is, I like the combination of words: "Gander eye", don't you.

Something tells me I am getting near the end of this page, and I had better begin folding up. I had in mind to read a little before going to bed, but unless the lights suddenly come on, I shall content myself with sitting on my gallery a little and see what my cats have to say about the situation in general, and perhaps I shall learn something from that quarter....

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Monday, January 24th, 1949.

Memorandum:

At 6:20 this morning, the Weather Bureau went on the air to advise us to start buttoning up our overcoats, for it was stated a cold mass of air had passed Tulsa, Oklahoma, headed southward, between 1 and 2 a.m., and would no doubt strike us shortly.

But the whole day unrolled with sunny skies and a warmth equal to yesterday's, making things delightful, and a jacket of any kind unnecessary. I hope the cold mass got lost somewhere and has headed back toward Canada.

I had a letter from the Madam's one time friend in Shreveport who asked me to burn it on reading, which, of course, I did. She didn't have much news but did pass along some gossip. Sister confided two things to Miss William Trichell that were pretty hilarious, - one was that aside from my dental difficulties, I am a terribly sick man, but for some unknown reason will never consult her husband, and the other was that at Christmas time, the General made it a special point to call on her in Shreveport, which, as lies go, make the one just as good as the other. What a bag.

But in the ailing department, I responded to a call this morning from my Balthazar patient living in the cotton fields beyond the bamboo. I found the man walking about the house, clad in pajamas, his throat bleeding some where he had attempted suicide, and his wife and children flitting about the yard, frightened pink. The poor man must be suffering the tortures of the damned whenever the effects of the opiates he is taking die out, and I suppose he may have been a mental case before his fatal illness overtook him. One difficulty his wife is having is to make him take his medicine, - which he doesn't realize staves off his suffering, poor thing. Well, I got him back to bed without much difficulty and got a good sedative down him, remaining for a while until it began to take an effect. I talked with Dr. Knipmayer on the telephone, and we decided the doses should be stepped up somewhat and that more potent "Hoffman Pills" should be forth coming as soon as

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the present medicine runs out. It doesn't seem as though the man could last another month, although as he approaches death, it seems that his strength, instead of decreasing, gradually becomes greater. Eventually we shall be able to give people one great big sleeping potion, I hope, so that all this suffering may be avoided, but the world doesn't seem to have moved quite that far along toward civilization as yet.

Mrs. Rand telephoned me this morning, just to say she and hers hadn't deserted me completely. It seems they have been busy as bees attending Camelia shows, when having any free time. She said the one in Lafayette last week end was wonderful, and that the one in Alexandria yesterday and Saturday went off ever so nicely, too, and with plenty of people from South Louisiana up to Alexandria to visit her for the week end. And that she liked, because she likes loads of people in the house, but she said she was anxious to get up to the camp again soon, and intends bringing some of her guests, so I reckon I'll be seeing them before the present week has run its course.

I got in some unimportant but satisfying licks of work at Arenbourg today, - mostly trimming our little crepe myrtles, which require time for the job, but which is pleasant labor. The natural tendency of the plant is to make itself into a bush, and it is by trimming at this season of the year that the full vigor of its spring growth will go into the main stem, and so make itself into a tree, and it's been fun doing.

I learned today that J. E. and Celeste will be at the Commodore on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, I believe, - January 31st, February 1st and 2nd. I have no doubt that other officials of the R. E. A. from the Wachtiches area will also be registered at the same hotel, and as the whole posse will probably be theatre-going and what not, will certainly not find time dragging during their stay. Call Celeste if you care to, - or don't bother if things are fairly full up, for I haven't mentioned the possibility that a friend of might might telephone, and she will be so much of a nervish during her stay that she really won't know that anyone might have telephoned.

I intended to remark in my memo of yesterday that this letter may be a day late in being mailed, - assuming I may not get back from the dentist's tomorrow before the postman leaves. I mention it so you will not think it odd that this note is too laggarly in reaching your true hand.

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Memorandum: Tuesday, January 25th, 1949.

The weather remains both a problem and a puzzle to the poor forecasters, for it is cold and sleeting to the Southwest, while it poured for hours in Shreveport and the sun remained out in these parts. I believe San Antonio, to the South West of us reported a 14-degree reading last night while ours was 68, - which doesn't make any sense at all, - but I hope the good work goes on.

I saw Jan at the store this morning just before he left for town. He told me he thought we ought to try to get J. H. to give Celeste Aurelia as a servant, and to fill her place at the big house by Sam Brown. At least this would provide Celeste with a most desirable servant while we would be getting a first class rogue. Truly "none are so blind as those who will not see." Jan was surprised and he told me I went to town between 8 and 9, Mr. Brew taking me in. I believe today's sitting was a little rougher than last week's, but I got along alright, and back home in time to send out the mail. Foolishly I did a little gardening during the afternoon, when I would have done better probably to collapse but I don't feel much the worse for wear tonight, and shall fold up early anyway, - and if I can stay awake, will probably listen to Bob Hope and to Fibber McGee and Molly. I had to make a couple of trips beyond the bamboo hedge during the day, too. Poor Nancy Balthazar continues to present a problem to his family who seem to be completely terrorized by his intemperate actions. This noon I found him storming about the house, his neck still bleeding ever so slightly from his attempt at suicide the other day. I am stepping up the frequency of the sedative doses, and with what I have on hand, I think I shall be able to hold him down until Thursday when I shall telephone Dr. Knipmayer to bring along a more potent narcotic that will make it easier for Nancy to slumber and his family to exist. What a pity a human being has to go through such ordeals when there is nothing to prevent him from passing out anyway within a few weeks at most.

804E

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I did a little reading from Mr. Byrnes' "Frankly Spaking" last night and was delighted to run across a reference to Mr. Roosevelt in connection with the development of the atom bomb. I suppose the story has been told many a time in detail, as to just what F. D. R. played in the matter, but by some circumstance, I have remained in the dark about it up until now. Mr. Byrnes says Mr. Roosevelt first mentioned the matter to him on a hot summer's evening in 1943, I believe. And further along Mr. Byrnes writes that he will always regret that F. D. R. died without learning that the Manhattan Project was a success. "It had been undertaken and carried on to a conclusion solely because of his courage and vision in the days when the effort seemed hopeless".

I have of course heard much talk about the work on the project, - mostly by news commentators, - and I realized that F. D. R. must, as head of the armed forces, had to decide the undertaking, but this is the first time I have run across a statement by a responsible person who so completely attributes the development of atomic energy to F. D. R. himself.

Perhaps one reason why I am so anxious to have Madam Roosevelt do a book covering the White House years is because I am hoping she will go into some detail as to the history of the project, how, when and by whom it was first proposed, the President's reaction in the beginning and what support he had and from whom when the proposition was nearing the point was to whether it would be pushed or rejected. In view of the vast force atomic energy is to play in the future, - and let us pray it may all be along peaceful lines, every particular about the points mentioned above, - plus a thousand more, - should most certainly be set down by Madam Eleanor who undoubtedly had as close an inside tract on such particulars as exists.

The enclosure is of no especial interest, but I send it along regardless. I may have mentioned before that Mr. Grunewald, now in his 70's, after having been Commissioner of Markets in New Orleans, has returned to the Roosevelt Hotel which once he owned. His father was a German musician who came to Louisiana, following the Revolution of 1848, I believe. One son became a publisher of music in New Orleans, and is still the local Schirmer, - at least the house he founded is. Cousin Josephine's son is Editor of some Washington paper, The Star, I believe. They are friends, - Cousin Josephine and her husband, of Dr. Mattas, and I suppose he is still their physician.

This is certainly a disjointed letter, and I apologize. A couple of interruptions haven't helped its coherence. A magician performs at St. Matthew's School tonight, but I have declined a second invitation in favor of folding up, which I do herewith....

111E

3410

Wednesday, January 26th, 1949.
Memorandum: It has been a hurly-burly day, with much comings and goings, the weather humid, with occasional sprinkles, and things, inside and out, by sixes and sevens. The most striking event of the day was J. H.'s compliance with Van's request that Aurelia be fired.

Mattie has been delegated to do the cooking and the housekeeping, with assistance from Sam Brown. That arrangement may work a week, perhaps a month, - and then some other arrangement will have to be made, but the world keeps on spinning regardless of such throwing away of assets. I shall never cease to marvel, however, that people whether in the Kremlin or at Helrose, are so short sighted as to throw away advantages in exchange for ill will and confusion.

On the pleasanter side, I had some pleasant visits from friends of color who, because of the weather, are forced to let the tractors take a vacation momentarily. The Dark Duke passed this way this morning, bringing with him a mulatto who saw much fighting in the Pacific. As they regaled me with various experiences, and I caught the unusual slant the gave to operations, many of which must have been beyond their comprehension, it occurred to me it would be a splendid idea to take these very personal accounts down on my machine, just as they relate them. It will be nice for them to set aside for their children, - possibly pasted in the family bible, and the accounts at the same time will supply quite an interesting side-light as to the concept of what the war was all about in the eyes of this segment of color which participated in it.

I was struck by the Dark Duke's answer to a question put to him by an officer who asked him why he was fighting. It seems the question was not new, for the Army was trying to instill the answer to such questions in the minds of all its officers and men. The Dark Duke told me that most of the men in the ranks had declared they were going up to the front to fight for America, but when the officer asked him, he declared that he was finding himself in a place he didn't like, and that he was fighting as hard as he could to get the business done and to save his own skin. I liked that.

When I have had an opportunity to set some of these stories down, I shall make them in duplicate, - one for each of the boys and one to send along for your delectation, - supposing they may turn out of sufficient interest to burden you with them.

3411

0116

It was pleasant to learn from Van at supper that he is leaving for New Orleans Thursday and will not return until Monday. There will undoubtedly be plenty of pilgrims passing this way over the week end, and if not, there will be plenty of local people I shall want to see. Then, too, the hands are scheduled to pass this way on Sunday, and it will be fun having dinner with them at their camp. I have about one million things I want to do at Arenbourg, and a notice in today's post indicates some stuff I recently order will be here on Thursday or Friday, and with the weather so warm and humid, it will be an excellent time to get them into the ground. If lucky, I may get around to do some reading, but that will be scant, I fear. On Friday I have to go to town, too, and that will eat a hole in that day, so far as local operations go. Poor Mr. Bachelier, I know he wants to get up this way for a visit, too, and I really must invite him to do so shortly, - but I am forever putting that off until after this or that is taken care of, and of course, under such circumstances, things can so easily be pushed further and further back.

I guess there isn't anything especially interesting in any of the enclosures, but I send them along regardless. On second thought, however, there may be just a flush of impulse in the Lake letter that suggests the forthright nature that somehow comes to mind when thinking of citizens of the Lone Star state. I refer to the fact that La Lake wants to call on the Matchitoches ladies I mentioned in a recent letter to her. I am enchanted that she should want to, but somehow I am mildly astonished that she should want to since they are utter strangers to her and she is merely planning to pass through the town without stopping over night. I don't suppose this impulse is any more Texan than is manifested by citizens from the other 47 states, although I must say that circumstances has brought this tendency to bear on my mind by more people from Texas than any other community. I think another example of it might be found in the case of James Cunningham who met the Worsleys once in Cloutierville under my auspices, and then, prior to coming to Melrose to spend the night just before Christmas he had the courage to contact them and accept dinner at their home on the strength of the former contact. Of course one excellent way to get somewhere, I suppose, is to be hampered in every way by nothing in the way of social customs, and I am tickled to see the thing crop up a little in the letter of La Lake.

It seems so long since we last heard from Miss Nellie, - before Christmas, I believe. I hope she didn't celebrate too much in Wicksburg....

6116

3412

Thursday, January 27th, 1949.

Memorandum: I don't know why I was so surprised to find mail awaiting me when I arrived at the post office this morning. Perhaps because I thought the torrents of rain might have delayed the postman. But he had already arrived, and I was enchanted to have your elegant letter of Saturday awaiting me.

I am sorry you are having forces converging on you both from the North and the South this coming week, - or this present week for I am afraid it will not enable you to get much relaxation, following the transfer of your office from one station to another. And what a pity that business had to transpire on just the day you wanted to have a little peace. But you found a measure of recompense in thus having thoughts of Tilloah eradicated from your mind for the most part, and I am certainly thankful you hadn't planned to make such a jaunt, in view of all the exhaustion the day brought with it. If only you may have been able to grab off a measure of relaxation before the Northern and Southern assaults reach the focal point.

I know your little girl friend is going to like her new luggage, and I hope you don't have to warn her not to be a little Miss Alberta who is want to travel with an old torn down piece, tied round with a piece of clothes line in order to leave her new baggage at home in order to keep it nice and not soil it by travel.

And how I marvel with you at her interest in Chemistry. I can only gaze from afar and admire the enthusiasm springing up in minds of the mathematical type, and how well can I imagine your lack of enthusiasm over the subject generally, and particularly in view of your association with those in that field. But there is one thing to be thankful for, - that your little girl friend has a heart that keep the mathematical mind in some kind of balance, for I guess it is that human quality that makes Albert Einstein so remarkable, for it does seem as though many a person, top-heavy with figures and formulae, somehow looses contact with the heart so often that we incline to shrivel almost at the mention of test tubes and the like.

In today's post came a couple of copies of Holiday, -

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issues dealing with Texas, - and sent by Mr. and Mrs. Gage. I shall write them a thank you note tonight, and ponder on how strange it seems that I should have heard from them so often through packages but never in my life received a line. It seems to me it was only last week I wrote to thank them for that book about Elizabeth Key, and here I shall have to write another almost before they receive the earlier epistle.

I am gratified for the excerpt from the Herald Tribune, covering the case of the trial in Soso, Mississippi, - what a name, - of the man sent to prison for five years for marrying a white woman. If that case is taken to the Supreme Court, a decision in favor of the defendant might set or up set a whole flock of statutes below the Mason-Dixon Line.

The Jones County mentioned in the article has had some attention in historical quarterlies from time to time, covering the period when it set up its own independence from the Confederacy during the Civil War. It is hill billy country, I am sure, and it seems to me the case was covered, - and incorrectly, if I remember aright, by that Mississippi writer we used to talk about, but don't seem to have heard much about of late. The one who wrote the Promised Land, - curious his name eludes me. And I don't remember the name of the book in which he wrote about the Country of Jones, but it was in the same volume he recited the Goat Castle case, and had nightingales singing in Dave McKitterick's neighborhood. Eventually, after re-reading the article a riving today, I shall attach it to our Mississippi material, as a fine contemporary record of hill billy doings.

Today was Knipmeyer Day, but it pour so hard the good Dr. didn't stop until late this evening, returning from Magnolia. It was so muddy he couldn't get to Boy Nancy Balthazar's. But I had already made a trip in my boots, finding the man more difficult. He was pursuing his wife with a hammer when I arrived and told me he proposed to kill her first and then himself. I told him it was so much better to do it the other way around, and took the hammer away from him. Dr. L. promises to send knock-out drops to me tomorrow, and to arrange to have the man removed to an asylum.

What a business! I am quite alone on the plantation, - and like it. The psychopathic condition boiling up into the dismissal of the servant is something one would expect more from the sister rather than from her nearest-in-age brother, but there may be some parallelism in both cases. I understand Sam's house in town is getting along nicely, floors down, roof on, etc., and when that is finished and occupied, perhaps everything will ease a little in this area. If this letter be delayed a day, it will be due to the fact that I must run in to town in the morning. Again my gratitude for your nice letter. Observe enclosure having no return address. I am responding via cane.....

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Friday, January 28th, 1949.

A hurly-burly kind of a day, but one which comes to a close with a measure of satisfaction, primarily because a couple of things, too long postponed, have been taken care of, and because some new items have been added to our Arenbourg collection.

I went to town early this morning, ostensibly to visit the dentist, but in reality to have some papers sign. The papers were of no account, covering an estate already insolvent, but required by law in order to wind up the matter. It recalled to mind the old wrangle in British circles wherein on school of thought was forever maintaining that cutting off the King's head would not be legal unless His Majesty was sufficiently gracious as to sign the order of execution with his own hand.

I suppose this is one of the few days in the year when not a Henry was in the Parish. I drove into town with Mr. Baranowski, having him drop me at Mrs. R. B. William's home, and there, following a little chat, she read me a couple of short sketches she had done on her grandfather which sounded in words what Grant Wood looks like in oil. I found them excellent. Later she drove me to the County Clerk to execute the papers. The latter, whom I had never met, said he felt he knew me quite well because of the frequency with which he had heard Caroline Dorman speak of me.

Back home by noon, I was too late to post the mail, - hence the two letters reaching your true hand in this post. In the mail awaiting me was the enclosure, and some parcel post items on which I got busy during the afternoon.

At Arenbourg I set out a fine specimen of box wood, to balance the other one, so well established, on the terrace.

I also set out some white wisteria which I believe have a pretty good chance to grow. They have an excellent root system, and after trimming them back, I left them, - the stems, at about 3 or 4 feet in height. I shall continue to cut them back from season to season as their tendrils reach further and further afield. In this way, we shall be able to have tidy little numbers with astonishingly large blossoms of pure white, and a perfume like unto honey. In appearance, after a few seasons, they will suggest rose trees in form. And all this is based on the assumption that these wisteria are of the proper sex to produce flowers, - a factor of which one is never certain until the plants have become well established. If they prove to be the sex that produces no flowers, I shall persuade Mr. Bachelier to help me

FILE

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impregnate them. I am hoping however, that this will not be necessary, so that their growth may not be set back by such fiddling about.

J. H. telephoned from Washington about 5 o'clock. He seems to be making it alright. I don't know if some of his plans were altered by the fact that Representative Overton Brooks' father-in-law died last night in Louisiana. I think J. H. had stirred up something about pecaness to be furthered while in Washington, and Mr. Brooks had just taken the matter of a floor being put under them with Mr. Truman. I suppose the fune al in Louisiana may put a crimp in that twist unless Russel Long will carry through where Mr. Brooks left off.

The rains to the north of us have brought Red River to flood stage above Shreveport, and according to estimates at noon today, the flood crest should reach Grand Ecore on Monday or Tuesday. But tonight's weather report indicates we are to get a cold snap at long last tonight and tomorrow, - a 14 degree low, I believe. This will undoubtedly slow up the flow of water considerably, and so I have no doubt the matter will be eliminated so far as any danger of us getting our feet wet in this area.

I got a chance to read a little more from "The End of a Berlin Diary", and find it an excellent follow up to "James Byrnes" book, for the latter gives a detailed account of what was what in the Council of Ministers, while the former gives the average man in the street concept of what isn't going on behind closed doors, and the comparisons are interesting and illuminating.

Another thing I like about the Scheirer book is the official statements and documents it gives regarding such items as the conclusion of the wars in the East and the West, Mrs. Roosevelt's statement on receiving the news of F. D. R.'s passing, etc.

I learned for the first time that Mr. Scheirer comes from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the home town of Grant Wood and Carl Van Vechten.

Paynie telephoned from Monroe, La., yesterday and said he had seen the General in Baton Rouge last Sunday and that the latter said he would be at Melrose tonight, stopping over on his way from Baton Rouge to some place north of Shreveport where he planned to pick up his wife who has been visiting her sister there.

I pen these lines at 11:00 p.m., and as the General hasn't appeared as yet, I take it he must have changed his plans. I would have been nice to see him under such favorable circumstances. Thanks so much for sending me la Teata's address. I shall write her first thing in the morning...

FILE

3416

Sunday, January 30th, 1949.
Memorandum:

Tonight the White Garden, usually wholly green at this season of the year, is solidly white.

About 2 o'clock this morning, a fine snow began falling. By morning, it was 3 or 4 inches deep, and the white fleece kept on tumbling down all day, with tonight's radio promising it will keep steadily going until Monday morning.

All day Charlie and Dora remained rolled up together on my front gallery where I had made a fine house of cardboard boxes stuffed with cotton for my cats. There I fed the animals and there they seemed content to remain. There was method in my madness in making things so comfortable for them on the front gallery, for on the back gallery, I had rigged up a fine banquet for our feathered friends. All day the board was busy with blue jays, cardinals, "chi-chis", - Peter's name for them, Warblers, I guess, and a fine sowing of mocking birds and tiny wrablers of various persuasions and a few fat robins.

The furred friends seemed ever so subdued all day, but the feathered section were busy as bees, and it almost seemed as though the birds rather liked the frolic.

At noon I passed by Arenbourg which looked ever so strange and lovely under its blanket of snow. It is lucky this covering, instead of mere cold, came so soon after the planting of the white wisterias and box wood, for as they begin their life in their new situation, this mantle will tend to keep their feet warm until they are more firmly established.

The General never did reach Melrose, and if he is making the drive from Shreveport to Baton Rouge tonight, he must be having hard going. Dan came in unexpectedly for dinner today, although he had not expected to return from the Crescent City until Monday. He told me that he had run up from Baton Rouge to Natchitoches last night and came down to Melrose with his uncle (Paynie) this morning, but they both returned to town shortly after they had reached here, hoping to get ahead of the snow drifts. Pat will come down tomorrow to remain for a day or two during his mid term vacation.

I read a little more from the "End of a Berlin Diary" last night. The Diary seems to have become lost along the way, for...

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there is much filler, made up of secret documents from the Nazi secret files, accounts of the Nuremberg trial, etc. I suppose all of this material has appeared in other places and probably was widely printed in the world press at the time the trial was in progress, but as I had never heard any of it in detail before, I found it interesting, and especially the quotations from the personal accounts, as revealed by one or two diaries kept by high party members.

I may or may not finish the Scheirer book tonight, even though I haven't much more to go before reaching the end. But as the snow continues floating down from on high, I hold my breath in expectation that momentarily the fragile power lines may break under their load, bringing to an abrupt halt all further literary pursuits and contacts via the ether with the outside world. until the break comes, however, I shall continue to "hold the thought" that the circuits will be maintained, and perhaps a rain in a day or so will eradicate these "feathers from Mother Goose's bed", and the sub arctic give way to the sub-tropic.

Atmospheric conditions last night made radio reception impossible, save for stations in this region, - New Orleans to St. Louis, and sample the air waves as I might, all I could squeeze out was hill-billy and more hill-billy music. I finally turned the machine off and substituted my reading outfit in its stead. Saturdays, - and all day and night, hill-billy seems to be the order of the day in these parts, but oddly enough just before dawn on Sundays this type of noise gives place to classic music almost exclusively. I wish the changes were less radical, so that by way of compromise, the hill-billies could get their national anthems all the time one one station or another while other people might sometimes find a civilized tune or two without having to await the coming of a Sabbath dawn. But this morning was really worth waiting for, - much Mozart, - Sonatas, Rondo and what not, played marvelously on the harpsichord by Wanda somebody or other. They were certainly marvelous recordings and the harpsichord strikes me as one of the more perfect instruments for portraying mein lieber Wolfgang.

I hope that today brought you a measure of the pleasure it held for me, - the quiet and absence of too many people milling about, and if this has been the case, I know you have enjoyed the opportunity it has afforded to get caught up in the literary department a little. I reckon the local snows must have discouraged pilgrimaging completely, for none passed this way, and as the snow began falling in Alexandria before it it up this way, I reckon they relinquished all thoughts of trying to make the 50 mile jaunt through drifts. But the snow didn't discourage some of my colored friends from passing this way, - rather, - it le - ing, - ugabou and so on, shivering and shaking and grateful withal for the fine cup of tea I served up to them. And now I think I ~~ixabou~~ shall serve myself one, thinking the while of many things as I dunk my tender leaf into my steaming cup.....

3418

3418

Monday, January 31st, 1949.

memorandum: How nice to have your delightful letter in today's post.

From your account of impending arrivals in opposite directions, I infer your week end was not too restful, although I am hoping much steam had escaped before Sunday arrived, so you might be able to grab off a moment or two, just for yourself.

I am so glad to have the details about the Sherwood, and I can well appreciate your wish to read it slowly, what with all the details packed on each page. I am writing old Xenophon to ask that it be put on records just as soon as possible so that I may absorb some of the material you find so interesting. I am glad you told me what the author said about not asking Madam Roosevelt to draw on her memory for clarifying one point or another. It was certainly thoughtful and kind of the author to respect the former First Lady's feelings in this matter, and at the same time, it will perhaps allow her greater freedom in setting down her own interpretations as to people and events when, - and if, - she gets around to it.

I liked the Fred Allen show of a week ago which you enjoyed, and last night I was equally pleased. I thought the business the French films, - the inability to keep up with the French action of the actors while being distracted by the reading of the English text, - the whole skit being hilarious.

It is good of you to tell me of the loss of your view of the Versailles Chapel-a-top the pierre, in exchange for the occasionally shrouded Empire State building. It is always so pleasant for me to have in mind where "you are at" as my thoughts turn in your direction from sun-up to dark.

The enclosed card from Madam Marco indicates she failed to receive my last letter to her, written about Christmas time. In that letter I enclosed a very valuable old Beaumont letter of 1848 which I thought she would enjoy reading. I am hoping she may find it among her mail, just as she did another letter of a year or two back, mailed her in April and discovered by her

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the following October or November.

The New Orleans library, without my request, sent me a book to go along with the End of the Berlin Diary. It has a not very fascinating title: "The Last Days of Hitler", and is by on Trevor-Roper, recorded by Eugene O'Neil, Jr. From the title, I thought I wouldn't be much interested in the thing, but it turns out to be a very excellent work, giving a splendid picture of how things were in reality going by sixes and sevens in Germany from 1939 to 1945, and what a gulf there was, as between the racist party, the S. S. groups and the old military potentates. I find the picture so clarifying for one like myself who had to depend so much on the brevity and confusion of the radio reports during those years that I believe many of the obscure spots in my understanding of the whole sorry business are ever so much clear at long last.

And thanks for telling me of the receipt of news of a confidential nature from Anita's lesser half. It is a pity things aren't going any better in that set up, and as indicated in former conversations on this point, I have the gravest misgivings as to any hopes of things ever being arranged to the satisfaction of either party, - and of course the physical difficulties currently arising, are but further manifestations of the unsettled domestic set-up, which will probably not improve with the passage of time.

I reckon it is quite logical that the paragraph above should have followed the one it did. To me the misfortunes of so many people, - and for so many years after the excitement is over, must suffer for the unbelievable doings of the Nazi's high priest who apparently, I have about concluded, really didn't care particularly for any especially country or race, just so long as he could hood-wink them into serving as a tinder to light up his own selfishness.. It certainly is terrific to think of all the echoes of misery that must reverberate down the years, merely because one person's life was bent on rule or ruin, - rule for himself, if possible, or ruin for everyone regardless, if his own ego could not succeed.

But back to the contemporary scene, the White Garden was blanketed with about 10 inches of snow this morning, but cloudless & skies and a warm sun reduced the depth by half during the day. The whole country side is unique, and Arenbourg unusually striking and lovely. The animals continue to inhabit the front gallery and all day the aviary has been doing a land office business on the back. - the card enclosed and the clipping are both from Mrs. Brandon. Harding Carter might have gone a little further, I should think, but perhaps this much is enough. Again my thanks for your nice letter, and don't try to write when the days and Dutchmen, demand too much.....

1848

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February 1st, Tuesday, 1949.
memorandum: I have just received from the National Geographic Society a copy of the book "The Last Days of Hitler" by Trevor-Roper, recorded by Eugene O'Neil, Jr. It is a very excellent work, giving a splendid picture of how things were in reality going by sixes and sevens in Germany from 1939 to 1945, and what a gulf there was, as between the racist party, the S. S. groups and the old military potentates. I find the picture so clarifying for one like myself who had to depend so much on the brevity and confusion of the radio reports during those years that I believe many of the obscure spots in my understanding of the whole sorry business are ever so much clear at long last.

May I tell you that the National Geographic came today, and that I have already run through it with infinite pleasure. How nice of you to send it. How nice it will be to have it in the Arenbourg collection where we may consult it whenever we wish.

The pictures are certainly fine, and I think the one of Roane in the carriage along the Natchez Trace, is as gay as can be.

My secretary thought Devereux a palace, and I must say the gallery of Devereux does have a classic nobility about it that palaces ought to embrace always, but seldom seem to attain.

I noticed the picture of something or other at Bontura, which you referred to in a recent letter. The house stands on the Bluffs, near Silver Street, - the old highway which used to go down to Natchez under the Hill.

I don't know who wrote up Bontura for the Pink Papers, but they certainly made as cock-eyed a history of the place as the owners of the place made in its restoration. The article in the annual Democrat publication even goes so far as to say that Jenny Lind sang there, when everybody who knows anything at all about the doings of the Swedish Nightingale in Natchez, knows she merely went from the boat on the Mississippi to the Methodist Church where she gave her concert and immediately returned to the steamer taking her on to Memphis. But once somebody starts such tales, and like myths on the political horizons, they grow so madly in half baked minds that they become realities in history books before we know it. The same clap-trap might be cited in the case of the "Audubon" china illustrated in the present article. Everybody knows that Audubon never painted a piece of china in his life, but some bag, having heard that the fallow painted birds, discovered a pheasant or some such on a tea cup, and Lo! it automatically became the handiwork of James J. himself, and no less.

The great pity of Bontura is in the restoration work done by that Evans woman of California who bought it a few years ago, - about the time her volume, - "They found it in Natchez" appeared.

She either didn't know anything about the house, - or its ante bellum character, - or else she merely ignored its pre war status and just decided she was going to make a mansion of the place.

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It is doubtful if Bontura was built at the time Jenny Lind visited Natchez, and it most certainly was not erected as a private home but as a livery stable and hostelry for servants of planters who frequently came to Silver Street when the planters or their families were arriving or departing on Mississippi boats. It was a charming old inn for people of color, with a nice intimate bar for the people of color, and accommodations for them to remain over night while awaiting boats, and adequate facilities for stabling their horses and the carriages brought in for the gentry. But just as some snobs pass out when they learn that Yucca was built for and occupied by people of color, so Madam Evans had to hush-hush anything about color in ante-bellum Bontura, and began her restoration of the place by throwing out all the charming features of this unique ante bellum bar for negroes, and doing the whole thing over, with much crystal chandeliers, in creating a ball room, passing it off as the restored center of social activities of the old Adams County gentry.

But, as you see, I always get off the track, whenever I see stupid bags with more money than brains, trying to improve on history and destroying something which has a real claim to distinction, just so she can give her place the same features as all the rest of the town mansions. And so I shall break off at this point, - but not without thanking you for the magazine, whose pictures are certainly are the finest I have seen in ever so long. Tomorrow I am hoping to get around to read the entire article.

It was cold this morning, but it warmed up this afternoon, and the grass is beginning to show up through the snow. A drizzle is forecast for tonight, and so by morning I reckon the white garden will be quite green again. But there is no great loss without some small gain, and with the coming of the warmer weather again, the water system will undoubtedly be restored once more, for it froze up last Saturday, and running water is something I always miss mightily.

To avoid the necessity of bathing in a teacup Monday, I had Peter fill up my bath tub, - which is about twice the size of the usual ones, - fill it up with snow. Don't shiver at this point, for I had no idea of plunging in the same. But I did rig up a couple of electric heaters, training their full strength on the tub, and although the stuff didn't melt to readily, it came along alright with time, so that by this morning I was able to splash around with the greatest abandon, and liking the whole business.

And now I'm going to have a cup of tea and another glance at the Geographic, and early to bed in order to get to Arenbourg early on the morrow for some tree cutting and generally tidying up of the hedge row.....

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Wednesday, February 2nd, 1949.

Memorandum: ...

From sun up until sun down the ground hog had every opportunity possible to see his shadow in these parts today. But I am hoping he forgot to get up in time.

Little patches of snow stand forth in the corners of the White Garden. But the rest of the greensward is green, and what with higher temperatures, the plantation water system is functioning again and on the strength of it, I took an extra bath just before supper for the sheer pleasure of splashing around in ample streams of liquid from the hot faucet.

And with the melting of the snow came a pilgrim or two, but no one of especial interest. One lady who hasn't been in Alexandria in years, however, did ask me about that place and if I chanced to know Paul King and Blythe Rand who once lived in her neighborhood there a number of years ago.

She spoke of an experience she had had in a Washington theatre, the precise twist of which I had never heard the likes of before. She had planned to attend a party in Arlington immediately following the performance, and accordingly stood up just as soon as the final curtain descended, with a view to catching a bus that was leaving within a few moments. But on arising, she discovered too late that her foot had gone to sleep and automatically she fell side ways, sitting down slap in the lap of an unknown gentleman occupying the seat adjoining hers. Both were naturally surprised to find themselves in such an unexpected situation, and the people, beginning to stand up, were equally astonished. But everybody was even more floored, including the two actors in this scene when, on attempting to rise, the lady seemed to be taking the man with her, - a circumstance that impelled the man naturally enough to throw his arms around her and ask her to delay action momentarily at least. He seemed utterly confused and she was altogether embarrassed, - and the spectators appeared fascinated. Eventually, after some squirming about, the man explained that in falling into his lap so unexpectedly, the lady's weight had pushed down the zipper in the front of his trousers, and in so doing, the seat of the lady's dress was hopelessly enmeshed in the mechanism of the zipper, so that neither party could move without either the lady loosing her dress or the gentleman loosing his trousers. Ain't that a sight..... Well, the up-shot of the whole excitement was that lingering spectators finally assisted this unfortunate couple

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in prying each other loose, the net result of which was that the seat of the lady's dress was torn out, - a piece about 6 inches long and eight inches wide, while the gentleman retained the same memento arily as a kind of pink chiffon loin cloth. The lady of course apologized and departed for home and not for the party. And the man disappeared, - and how he explained the business to his wife, if any, I know not.

I read a little last night, but the style of the book or the voice of the reader set my head to nodding before I had gone far. The book is "These Things Are Mine" by George Middleton, the playwright. My reading got me only as far as his birth in New York and his education at Columbia, but I shall travel with him a little further tonight. I imagine the book may have some interesting chapters but at this writing I must confess that I do not recall having seen any plays by this author, and so that element of interest is lacking to leaven my interest.

I had supper with Dan tonight, - Pat having returned to Baton Rouge this morning, so the two of us were alone. He said J. H. telephoned from New York this afternoon, saying he would be home on Saturday. I believe they were leaving for Niagara Falls tonight, so I take it he must be planning to come all the way by train, but if weather is favorable in St. Louis, I shouldn't be surprised if he would hop a plane, for never has he failed to blow in a day or two ahead of schedule.

Perhaps it is just as well if Celeste doesn't arrive until Saturday, however, for Saturday night's cold burst the pipes in her kitchen and bath, requiring Puny, in his role of plumber, to do a heap of business putting the pipes back in order, and such domestic details turn out to be unusually wearing for Mme. Egon.

Attrice came up from Little River this morning and paid me a little visit. How much I should have liked to visit in that neighborhood last Sunday when the storm was at its height. Can't you imagine how delicious St. Mary's on the Bayou must have appeared, the little bridge festooned in snow and the church itself viewed through a swirl of snowflakes. Of all the place in the world I can think of, Little River must have been more like a Currier and Ives winter scene than one could run into up and down the country.

A couple of weeks back I promised to have dinner in town one night during the present week with the Worsleys, but I shall use the snow as an alibi, for I am really too satisfied here with my accustomed routine to think of pulling up and down Cane River at mid night. Perhaps I had better pray for the snow to linger longer. That's a pretty poor excuse but it's the only one I have at the moment....

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Thursday, February 3rd, 1949.

Memorandum:

The White Garden is all green again. A gentle rain last night dissolved what little was left, and, as though to guarantee the work, today's thermometer readings were high enough to melt anything and tonight the radio promises even higher readings before dawn.

But the cold of the week end served a most excellent purpose, aside from disposing of insects, for it held up the moisture feeding into Red River and its tributaries, so that the crest of the flood passed us on Monday night, and is now well below Alexandria on its way to the Mississippi and the Gulf, thus allowing ample space for the heavy "dews" of last night and tonight.

Last night I read a little more from Middleton's "These Things Are Mine", and again I was struck by the phenomenon of a great city wherein one may dwell ever so close to one person or another without ever dreaming of the proximity. Mrs. George Middleton, it turns out, is the daughter of the late Senator LaFollette, and hence sister of the present ex-Senator and ex-Governor of Wisconsin, and during the years when my old friend, Elizabeth Raeburn Hoy lived in Waverly Place, where I used to encounter many an interesting soul, the Middletons were living at 158 Waverly Place, too. Mr. and Mrs. George Arliss lived in the same old house, opposite the Northern Dispensary, and, at the same time, a friend of mine of later years, was dwelling in nearby Gay Street for a time. And oddly enough just a couple of blocks away, between Elizabeth Raeburn Hoy's and my own residence lived one, Lyle Saxon whom I had to wait to meet until I visit New Orleans. Isn't it odd how near yet so far people can be without the magnet of fate drawing them together until they have separated from each other by ever so many miles.

In my reading, I haven't run across but one play by Middleton that I ever witnessed, - The Big Pond, with Kenneth McKenna, on the New York stage, which I thought was grand. Later I saw it in a movie version, - Maurice Chevalier and Claudette Colbert, if memory serves, - and it wasn't much on the screen.

I jogged my memory to bring back to mind a host of people I had met on various occasions at dinner parties and garden parties at Elizabeth Raeburn's, but for the life of me I can't remember the George Middletons, - Mrs. Middleton being Paula LaFollette, and something tells me I would remember them, had they chanced to be there whenever I was. The Arlisses were familiar figures, of course, but try as I may, I can't recall the Middletons at all, and so,

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like Mrs. Saxon, I suppose, they just didn't chance to grace to Hoy soirees.

Today's mail didn't amount to much. The enclosure speaks for itself. Isn't it amazing la bag is so dumb as to still suppose I contemplating visiting her in Shreveport.

Dr. Knipmayer passed this way as usual. The mud and water were too deep for him to visit our patient beyond the bamboo hedge. I asked him to have the proper papers filled out so that M. Balthazar could be taken to a hospital or an asylum without further delay, and I accepted some more sedatives to administer to the patient until the ambulance gets around, - and through the mud, - to whisk him away.

Following Elmer Davis' broadcast tnight, I was pleasantly surprised to hear Dr. Knipmayer, gon on the air from the Watchitoches station, speaking in favor of a tax referendum to decide on the parish building a new health unit, - and Heaven knows it needs one in appearance, Dr. K. somehow reminds me of Senator Taft, and I as a little taken a-back to discover that his radio voice, too, suggests the Ohio Senator's. But there the analogy stops, else Dr. Knipmayer would be stopping at Melrose each Thursday.

Dee-dee and his son-in-law, the Dark Duke, came up from Little Aiver today. They had no especially news but dropped in to see me regardless. Another of Dee-dee's family, - a son-in-law, named Jeff Johnson, is beginning to show signs of insanity, it is said. He is the father of five children and appears to be in excellent health physically. I was asked to see Jeff, and I agreed to do so if he would pass this way, since I seldom get out Little Aiver way. Last night I stumbled on to a Columbia program having something to do with the treatment of people not hopelessly insane but merely mentally ill. I guess I had better begin paying better attention to such broadcasts, what with the several people I know and am about to know who are slightly on the goofy side. There's nothing like being slightly off one's self, I suspect, if one really wants to appreciate the non compotis condition of others, so I really ought to be a gr at help for poor Jeff.

During the past couple of days, there has been a great deal of popping along the bamboo hedges, both to the north and the east or rather west of the garden. Little Lam dropped by to see me on his way home tonight, after having bagged a dozen black birds and a rabbit. He invited me to join him for black bird pie and rabbit for supper tonight, and to see his fine new son, now a week or two old, I suppose. I shall not be able to make it, but having heard so much from Brother about twenty and four black birds baked in a pie I am curious to know what they really taste like....

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Friday, February 4th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The enclosures speak for themselves.

Tomorrow Celeste will be here and it will be good to learn about your contact with her on Tuesday. I shall be curious to learn if you found any resemblance to the Frau Richard I thought I had detected ever so long back. I hope the contact was pleasant, and perhaps it will make more vivid the occasional reference to her that creeps into these Memoranda.

The letter from Beth Williams Cloutier touches on a point mentioned some months back. At the time I may have mentioned the fact that she asked me to name her plantation and I tossed out Beaufort without hesitation, so that everyone laughed, because of the speed with which the response was made. Apparently the name pleased her, and so the home of "Uncle Narcisse" of Lestan's diary is at long last to bear the Beaufort name. I pass by the place on my way to town but I haven't stopped in to see her in years. When they have the unveiling this spring, I must make it a point to pass by, - either before or after, but surely not on the precise day, for the Cloutier parties are made up of half the Parish, encumbered with tons of elegant foods and never end, - and I'm not much on that type of gathering.

From Robina's letter I gather the snow must have extended all the way to the Gulf last Sunday, although I am perhaps reading into the letter something that isn't there. I gathered from the radio that the sleet extended only as far South as Baton Rouge, but perhaps it actually took in the New Orleans and Biloxi neighborhoods, too.

I am glad all the snow is gone, and although a shower early this morning curtailed garden operations, I was able to trim some roses and hedges, and it was good to be out of doors.

Last night I read a little more from the Middleton book, spending most of my time listening to familiar names of people and places in Paris where in the early 1920's, the Middletons spent a couple of years. They occupied an apartment at 20 rue Jacob, - a street a couple of blocks from the Seine, - and running parallel to the river, on the Left Bank. Some mention was made of various interesting old houses and gardens in the neighborhood, which

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brought back half forgotten memories, for in the 1920's, I occupied an apartment at 50 rue Jacob, just up the street a block.

Naturally most of the Middleton slant is in the direction of the theatre, actors and playwrights, which would be more appealing to me, had I ever devoted much time to the theatrical field. But my speed was more on the historical side, and when I went to the theatre to see this or that play or this or that actress, I went as a spectator, of course, and so probably never got the keen interest the Middletons did during those years, but perhaps in a way I had as much fun. I am, however, grateful to the author for thus recalling to mind a number of things I had almost forgotten, and sometimes I shall probably mention them in our conversation, either directly or in these pages.

I wish the author had devoted a little more space to an account he mentions briefly of a dinner at the White House in 1940 which he and Mrs. Middleton (Paula LaFollette) attended. The affair was in honor of Catherine Cornell, although the diplomatic world was represented in the persons of Lord and Lady Tweedsmuir, Governor General of Canada and his lady. Mrs. Roosevelt presented the medal or statuette or whatever was presented to Miss Cornell at the time, and F. D. R., it is said, was in excellent form. The author also remarks upon the marvelous way in which everything contrived by way of service to make things run along smoothly. He might have expanded the whole business into a chapter instead of a paragraph and it would have suited me alright.

On Friday night at the Melrose Social Club the movies don't begin until 9 o'clock, and sometimes some of my friends drop in to see me before show time. It is always a pleasure to see them and to listen to their conversation. Tonight Mr. Brew brought his cousin, Junior Randolph, from down Magnolia way. Two or three people tapped on the windows at 15 minute intervals, so we really had quite a little gathering before they all left for the show. Little King, in jumping a ditch filled with water, somehow fell back into it after having cleared the hazard, so he took off his pants and washed them free of mud, drying them on the butaine while everyone chattered and fiddled with his fine rifle with which he had spent the afternoon at hunting. When the boys left here, Little King decided to carry his gun with him, which certainly ought to add a gay note on his entry into the club, for surely going to the movies, armed with a rifle, lends an odd touch in any locality.

A cloudless sky tonight promises a fine day tomorrow, and a slick new moon tells me I ought to make a turn at Arenbourg before folding.....

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Memorandum: Sunday, February 6th, 1949.
And so J. H. and Celeste reached home Saturday just before noon and dined with us at the big house.

Said Celeste: "I saw your friend. She is as pretty as a picture and the sweetest person I have met. She knows more about Watchitoches parish than anyone I know, living in or out of the parish. We found each other easily, for on the telephone we discovered that we both would be wearing red coats. I want to write her a little note as soon as I get back from Mansura where I'm going on Tuesday to pick up mother. She is the nicest person I have met and she sent all kinds of messages and remembrances to you."

So there you are. And that is the impression you made, and there remains for me to add but a single word: "Amen".

Immediately after dinner, Celeste went to town, and I saw her this noon at table, for she and J. H. and Payne ate at the big house. I didn't eat, because the Rands had bidden me to dine with them at their camp, but I sat and chatted (it) with them but we were talking mostly about local happenings that had transpired during their absence.

Under separate cover I am sending the Pecane booklet just off the press. You will notice a picture of J. H. on the front and one of Puny on the back. At least that is what the darkies tell me, and they laugh in high glee in so doing, for I take it the picture on the back page doesn't show up Puny very much. The photograph of Melrose inside the book looks odd to me, and as near as I can make out is an excellent example of how devastating a camera can be on occasion. As for the enclosure in this letter, I think you will find it of interest as a record of the development of an ancient and delightful house. It must have been flying at Edgewood, and it has always been my understanding that Jeff's (S.H.) mother is a bag and her younger son's wife is of the same water. Apparently Edgewood, which is an estate, is going to bounce into the elder Mrs. Lambdin's lap, and in consequence Mistletoe will rise to additional glories, and I am thankful for that, for it really is a lovely place.

When or just before Mary undertook the restoration of Mistletoe

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a number of years ago, we went through the old place pretty thoroughly. - Mary had just purchased it, - and after discussing various approaches at restoration, we sat on the back gallery, envisioning what might eventually be done by way of additions. At the time I described Laurel Hill to Mary, for she had never been there, and I stressed the charm of a patio, and especially miles out in the country, where the four walls gave a delightful feeling of intimacy by enclosing an inner garden, and doubly so when its preciousness became double by the expanse of expansive gardens surrounding the house. I am glad that this feature, guaranteed by a brick wall at the far end of the court, will bring this feature into existence. I shall write Mary tonight, asking her to go into further detail as to where she is developing the gardens outside the house, where her camellias and things are being set out, etc. Along about 1940 or 1941, we laid out the garden immediately in front of the house, little parterres balancing the garden walk leading straight to the front gallery, the parterres demarked by heaps of Giant's Beard from elrose, together with gobs of bulbs and iris and Spring things. Heaven alone know if and when I shall ever get to Matheze again, but if and when I do, it will be fun seeing how Mistletoe has flourished since last I passed that way.

I shall perhaps finish the Goerge Middleton book tonight. The chapters dealing with the Middletons in Europe were quite interesting. The author, in the mid 1920's, spent some time in Germany, Hunry and Austria, lining up the playwrights to join their American confreres in banding together to protect themselves against unscrupulous managers and producers, and his personal contacts with some of them is delightfully recounted. In Paris he took Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks to Pere Lachaise Cemetery to visit Sarah Bernhardt's grave. The author speaks of the enthusiasm with which the crowds in Paris hailed these contemporary film stars. The reader of this book, however, has such a distinctive way in pronouncing things in French that I am sometimes a little puzzled by what the text may look like. For example, he reads the script as recounting that on the boulevards, one frequently heard the cry of "Du Glace, Marie!" and for the life of me I couldn't figure that one out for at least a minute. I assume the crowds were hailing Mr. and Mrs. Fairbanks: "Douglas et Marie". The reader of these records, too, speaks of Mr. Middleton returning from Paris to New York on the "DeGrassess", making it rhyme with the final word in that famous couplet of Dorothy Parker, when she inquired why "Men seldom take passes".

And so things turn. It has been pleasant here today, and I hope you have had a pleasant week end, too. Among other things the hands had two turkeys, split in two, and barbecued, and I feel like a couple of turkeys, not barbecued but stuffed.....

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Monday, ^{Feb} January 7th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Your elegant letter of Wednesday to hand in today's post, and it goes without saying how much I enjoyed every word of it.

It was good to have particulars regarding your meeting with Celeste, and the couple of times I have seen her since my return indicates that she was perfectly entranced with you and everything about you. Only this morning did she mention how happy she would be when you find it possible to pass this way.

As for the cocktail, I think she thought nothing about it, and of course I shall not mention it. As you indicated in your letter, she was apparently desirous of being not too far from the lobby where she could catch up with V. H. when he came in, and to tell you the honest truth, I doubt if she even thought of the cocktail matter, so delighted was she to be able to spend her time with you. In the same vein, I recall once having taken a little girl to a restaurant for dinner, - I guess she was about 8, and she mentioned the Angel Food cake that the menu promised. But time had run so short when dessert time arrived that we had to skip the Angel Food, much to my regret. The matter preyed on my mind for ten years afterward, and whenever I thought of the little girl, I became depressed, thinking how I had failed her. Then, after years, I saw her again, and broke down and told her how much the matter had worried me. To my surprise, - and delight, she told me she really couldn't recall the matter at all, but that in recent years when she had had to eat Angel Food at parties, she always was unhappy about the stuff which she really had never liked after the first time she had tried it. I laugh to myself when she dismissed the matter so naturally and so obviously casually, for only then, after all those years of "misere", I discovered that I had really done nothing more than build up an enormous "mountain out of a mole hill" for tormenting myself. I feel perfectly sure that the cocktail business is altogether in the same category, so just let it slip back into the moth hole bracket it really deserves, for down this way it is the custom to suggest a cocktail as a casual method of saying that it would be nice to get together and dish a bit.

I am glad you referred to the matter of the couple of personalities she mentioned. I couldn't say for sure if I ever mentioned either individuals directly, although, if memory serves, I had something to say about Z. D. along about June 6th, 1946, in reference to difficult personalities that paralleled one or two that were bothersome in your own immediate neighborhood at the time.

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I got quite a kick out of what you had to say in quoting Egon at the air port. How nice to have been thus remembered. I have a feeling that Egon is one of those rare types in whom one may readily repose a confidence, being perfectly assured that whatever might be confided, would remain locked away in his heart. After all, it is only stupid bourgeois lack of understanding that would try to trump up some objection to kindred souls having a contact and Egon is so far above those who are too dumb to understand such understandings that he would really feel the happier because he knew such things really can exist, I believe. But, of course, it remains entirely up to your own judgement, - for you are so close to it, to make any decision in the matter. Always be assured, however, that whatever you do in such matters, you will have my heartiest approval, and no matter which way things should turn from that point forward, I shall always stand squarely behind you.

Isn't it grand that your little girl friend was among the hand picked 40, and how nice her new luggage will have an opportunity to provide her Washington trip with such a lovely and timely gift. And how noble of you, in spite of all your pressure of business and domestic demands, to have taken time out to put her thesis in proper form for you. When honors come to one in instances such as hers of the moment, it always seems to me the mantle of nobility falls not only on her but upon you and her mother, too, and I bless you spontaneously and naturally.

I am glad you had an opportunity to play out your role of "Puss-in-Boots", in marching across 59th Street. It is nice to know that whenever snowflakes start tumbling down from on high either this Winter or the succeeding ones, you will thus be fortified.

Swinging back to Celeste momentarily, I believe her birthday is February 25th. The clerk at the store thinks so, too. J. H. and I had supper alone tonight, and when I asked him about the matter, he chuckled and said: "I'll tell you the honest truth, I haven't the slightest idea."

I'm wondering if I mentioned in my last Memorandum that about 1 o'clock on Saturday morning I responded from my sleep to a tapping at my door. There I was quite taken aback to find about 8 mulattoes, hovering like ghosts about my gallery. One of them volunteered the information that his papa had died at 11 o'clock, and asked if I would telephone California, Chicago, etc., to acquaint the children with their father's passing. At the time the telephone was out of order, and so I sent them off to Mebtrose to get their business straightened out, but while I felt sorry for the crowd, I did find it odd that they had to travel in such large numbers to awaken me, and my impulse was to inquire who, if anyone, might be staying with the corpse. No one ever mentioned a name and I recognized none of them, and of course I didn't inquire, being content to fold up my beard again and wait until morning to learn it was an ancient mulatto living near Celine's, named Walter Delfin. So things turn, and there's an elegant moon and I'm going to head out for a little turn to Arenbourg and back before having a cup of tea and calling it a day....

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Tuesday, February 8th, 1949.

Memorandum:

I made the most of the 70 degree thermometer reading this morning by planting a flock of live oaks at Arenbourg.

If half of them I planted grow, I shall still have to transplant several of them, for I set several in the ground about a foot apart, hoping that one at least, out of such a concentration, might make a go of it. They were small but excellent specimens, and I believe they have a pretty good chance of making a go of it.

My idea is to place them so that eventually one will cast its protective shade on la maison de la reine and the other on that of du seigneur.

The ground, although not wet, was pleasantly moist, and about an hour after I got them all in their proper places, a gentle warm rain, lasting about an hour, slid down slowly, and so I guess Allah was all on our side.

Celeste left this noon for South Louisiana and said her return would depend upon her mother's health. If Madam Regard can take it, they will go on from Mansura to New Iberia to spend a few days there.

Celeste told me that a couple of officers came last night to telephone the Sheriff in town that Mancey Balthazar was a sick man and they thought it would not be proper to take him to jail. And so from this bit of information, I learned that the man's wife had gone to town yesterday afternoon and asked that her husband be put in jail, what with all the terror he is spreading in their household. I wish I had known what the lady was contemplating, for I was already engaged in getting him into an asylum, and I know not what this new turn will do.

On returning from Arenbourg at noon today, I saw Mancey go flying off across the cotton fields in the general direction of Ruy's house. It's wonderful what physical strength this man, on the verge of the grave, really has, or seems to have. His son-in-law overtook him on the highway and said Mancey was frightened for fear he was about to be taken to jail and had declared he was going to drown himself in the river. We followed him a piece, and finally overtook him. He didn't seem afraid of me and so I persuaded him to go back home again. What a business, and what a shame on all of us that the case is being so badly handled.

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Last night I dipped into a book, - The Gobi Desert, - by two ladies, - one of them named French, I believe. It is one of those things you read for lack of anything better. It is a contemporary thing, I believe, and the authors are English missionaries who appear to have spent years in China, and apparently are making a round in the outposts of the Gobi for the sake of religion, - although fortunately they don't overload the book with their purpose but rather incline to give some interesting vignettes of remarkable places and people they encounter. Some of the places they visit were mentioned in some detail in a book I read a few months back by a member of the staff of the Museum of Natural History, and I always enjoy reading of the different impressions such out of the way places make on such totally different types of travelers. The Natural History scientists made their trek in motor cars, of course, and must have been buttressed by many an aid and comfort common to Western civilization. The co-authors of the present volume, however, are proceeding by cart and are maintaining personal contacts with the people with whom they stay in the various far flung stations. As they speak Chinese and dress in the Chinese fashion, I suppose their impressions stem from a closer association with the people even though their scientific concept of what is around them doesn't enter into the tale. They do include some interesting facts on the historical side that are arresting, as for instance, a large granary at one oasis on the old Trade Route to Europe which experts have discovered that this building, embracing three rooms 139 feet long each, was used to store grain as early as 53 B. C., as the old records found in the ruins indicate. I always used to think of Marco Polo as one of the early travelers on these old Trade Routes from Imperial Rome to Cathay, but obviously some of these stations were more than a thousand years old when he made his famous round trip.

The enclosures aren't much, but I do always get a kick out of some of Mr. Bachelier's quaint expressions, such as "the old country" when referring to Europe. When referring to his glasses, he always says "my specks" and so on.

As for Mr. Cummingham, I shall respond to his promptly, and shall make no reference at all to how the set up will be within three weeks. For one thing, let us hope the unending blizzards from the North have turned around and gone back long before then.

I learned from Celeste that Miss Sally's son, Mat, who runs Magnolia is threatened with cancer of the throat and that the lady doctor drives down from town daily to give him certain shots at Magnolia since he refuses to go to New Orleans for treatment where both his brother and brother-in-law are prominent physicians. Curious how people react to the unexpected.....

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Wednesday, February 9th, 1949.

Memorandum:

A lovely day, pleasantly warm and rain sliding gently down from morn till night. A silver moon in a filmy silvery sky makes silver furrows in the sodden cotton fields while a gentle breeze from the South breathes a promise of spring. I like the whole business.

I can't say for the life of me which had more sense this morning, the five youths hunting rabbits along the terrace, - Fugabou, Ezra, Elam, Peter and Bookie, - all of whom caught a rabbit but got soaked to the skin in so doing, - or myself, who caught nothing but a heap of weeds I was pulling, but equally soaked when the morning was finished. To tell the truth, I guess we all had about the same amount of fun, and as for the rabbits, I didn't need any for my dinner, in fact I could forever do without that form of game.

From the enclosure, one gathers my correspondent is feeling alright. And I must say I was glad to have the Christmas Semon to run through again, although my reader went at it like I used to go after old Chaucer, understanding little or nothing until I learned the trick of listening to my own voice as I read the strangely spelled words aloud.

What Mr. Pipes has to say about the inordinate vitality Natchez people maintain with the passage of the years is perfectly true. I don't know that I ever met any who showed an particular amount of the stuff exuding from their person or personality at a given moment but in the long pull over and beyond the four score years and ten, they never seem to flag or quaver. Something I shall never know is to what their great age and continued activity in their 80's and 90's may be attributed to. Once I used to think it was because the rush of the 20th century never caught up with them in their remote traces, thus enabling them to conserve much of the energies people everywhere else frittered away in jumping around like a chicken with its hat off. But now, of course, the 20th century has at long last penetrated Adams County, and only the next generation can determine if the present one will carry off the palms of longevity even as those who went before.

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While I think of it, I want to refer to the Middleton book wherein he speaks of his visit to Germany and Austria in the mid 1930's. He mentions seeing Molnar, Lehar and if I am not mistaken Schnitzler, also. I was somehow under the impression that the last named had died ever so long ago, but I must have been mistaken. Once or twice I recall having read of the death of this or that person, only to discover later that the report had been erroneous. Perhaps this was a case in point.

The last part of the Middleton book devotes much of its space to Mr. Middleton's final play, as yet unproduced, having to do with Balzac, and a letter from Stephan Zweig in praise of it is quoted at some length. I remember that Zweig in his memoirs speaks with enthusiasm about Balzac and Middleton seems to think he was perfectly wonderful. Frankly, I know so little about Balzac, and I have read so few of his things, that I have no opinion at all about the man or his work. But since these two men found him so wonderful, my curiosity is aroused and I am wondering why I never discovered the man, or if it isn't so much the man as his artistic work that stirs up such praise. I must eventually look into this matter and discover what it is I have been missing all these years.

I had an unexpected caller this afternoon in the person of a 15-year-old boy, - Murrell Williams, - from back Little River way. He was as soaked as a chicken fished out of a rain barrel, and when I asked him why he had chosen such a wet day to travel, he said it was all because of a dream he had had last night wherein he thought he was in school again and was reading about Robert Fulton who always interested ever so much. But when turning the page in his dream, he discovered the book from that point on was blank whereupon the dream teacher told him if he would come to me, I would be able to finish the story for him. If he had swum up instead of walking, he couldn't have been wetter. But we got him dried out eventually and some corn muffins, fried chicken and a glass of wine discouraged anything like pneumonia, after which we took old Fulton apart, his unsuccessful attempts at getting Napoleon to sponsor a boat on the Seine and his eventual success with the Clermont on the Hudson. I guess the boy hadn't heard of some of this business and I had forgotten about all I ever knew, but when he got ready to leave, he seemed to feel his visit had been worth while. I believe he has been out of school two or three years, but is still anxious to study further and shows a keen interest in a flock of unexpected subjects. Circumstances at home make it practically impossible for him to go to school any more, but he can read well enough to explore a lot of things on his own hook, I believe, and undoubtedly he will find ample books from time to time to satisfy him in a large measure, for heaven knows there are enough kicking about here. Only I am hoping the next time his thirst for knowledge manifests itself in a dream, the following day may be more propitious for getting about...

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Thursday, February 10th, 1949.

Memorandum:

It's lovely weather, - and I'm tired.

And if that sounds silly, we might charge it off to Spring fever, but in reality, I labored mightily at Arenbourg today, and that is why I shall require no rocking to get me to sleep tonight.

I received some more crepe myrtles in the morning post and this afternoon I set them out and a number of privet bushes, continuing the green line along the drive placing three or four between the alternating pears and persimmons.

Tonight's forecast is for fair weather on the morrow, and I shall continue the good work, I hope, for Spring is likely to start doing business a y time, and it is well to get these things placed before the growing season begins.

The enclosures speak for themselves. I shall try to get a line off to Carolyn tonight, although it seems to have taken five days for her air mail to reach Melrose from San Francisco, and assuming the return trip would require an equal length of time, she will have left for Los Angeles before my note arrives. But, as she points out, it will be forwarded to her, - eventually. I shall not write much for this type of correspondence pleases me no better than it does one Helen Baldwin. After all, it takes from November 17th to February 5th to get word through, anything I might write on February 10th would undoubtedly turn out to be a last year's bird's nest by the time it reached Carolyn.

But I shall go ahead with my ideas on the Melrose article, so that if and when she does pass this way, or gets as close as Marshall early in March, she can have something to tuck in her folio when she consults with the publishers on kindred matters.

I am glad she likes her work and it is heartening the State Department is pleased, for perhaps this will mean a long term job for her, which, in view of her undertakings on her farm, will surely be a source of great satisfaction to her. She is a splendid person, but as Helen has pointed out in the past: - Lord, Lord, how difficult to catch up with her.

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Dr. Knipmayer passed this way this morning, and together we visited our patient beyond the bamboo hedge. He was on his good behavior while we were there and got back into his bed without any undue pressure on our part. He is so thin about the middle that I believe I could enclose that section of his torso in my two hands! How he has the energy to fly across the cotton fields on occasion, I cannot imagine. The Doctor brought some stronger sedatives and gave him one during our visit. An hour later his wife came to see me, saying the tablet came up just after we had left and that her husband was flying about the house at a great rate.

I went over and gave him another, and have heard nothing more, so I assume that by some miracle, it may have been absorbed. It wouldn't seem as though he could last more than a day or two more, and yet, not even the angels in Heaven know the real hour of departure, I suppose.

While Dr. Knipmayer was here, Aurellia came by to ask for some of my clothes which she had washed before the snow but hadn't been able to iron because of illness. She is keeping house at J. H.'s while Celeste is in South Louisiana and seems to be getting along nicely, and of course both Dr. K. and I were glad to see her; she always has so many odd things to tell about Mama, Bessie and the baby, all of whom seem to be doing alright.

A suggestion of Spring in the air must have set the animal world agog, for I haven't seen Dora or Charlie this week, and I assume they must be making social calls on Little River or some other remote region. But if the dogs have forsaken Yucca, the cats have made up for lost time; for during the past four days there have been four visitors on my front gallery, courting some of my seven with sly glances during the day and screaming madly during the night. Just as Charlie and Dora will be floating in as a matter of course one of these days, so will the feline section disappear without any a-do, I suppose, although I should much like to entice one of the latter to remain. He is a huge yellow cat with long fur, and his presence on the front gallery gives an explosion of gold and an exotic suggestion that is too gay for words. My own big yellow cat which, as the negroes say, has been "dressed", maintains his undisturbed calm, sitting aloof on a block of wood along side my door, completely tolerant of all the doings of his female associates and their male visitors, but leaving a large margin of space, as between himself and them.

So turns this Spring like day, and after I dash off a couple of letters, I shall do a disk or two on the Gobi, and then fold....

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Friday, February 18th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Perhaps we might speak of the enclosure first.

I am hoping some faint suggestion of the fragrance may yet linger when you open this letter. If you can still detect some faint spicy aroma, then you will no doubt have caught a suggestion of what the atmosphere is like when the wind is right and an 8 or 10 foot bush is in full flower. *Chinese Rose*

It usually blooms along in January and February, sometimes beginning as early as November. I usually try to keep a few stalks on my desk whenever it is in bloom, it gives such a pleasant suggestion of Spring in times when there aren't so many fragrant flowers in bloom.

We have a fine specimen at Arenbourg which I planted today. I know not what chance it has at survival, for the sun was strong today and there was a brisk wind, neither of which are very conducive to first rate transplanting, but we shall take a chance on it. Our bush is about 5 feet in height tonight, for I trimmed it back severely in order to give the roots a better chance to take hold the more readily. It is planted near the Alphonse Gate, near the South terminus of the drive, where we shall pass it many a time going in and out of Arenbourg, and something tells me we shall never tire of its pleasant freshness.

At the moment we are poised on that uncertain spot at which the seasonal scales are in perfect balance but obviously all set to tip in either direction, - back toward cold weather or forward toward Spring. The buds on the pear trees are beginning to swell and green ripples of clover run in every old direction across the fields. I am accordingly loosening up the earth around the fruit trees and magnolias, while as a special concession, the mimosas are getting some stirring around their root systems, too, although I give time to them on purely sentimental reasons, for I think they are perfectly able to make a go at life quite unassisted by man or spade. Two of them did so well last year in spite of the prolonged dry spell that I am convinced they will step into the category of youthful trees this Spring, regardless of moisture or a lack of it. Thus far they have retained a fairly standard shape, but

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one of them gives the impression it is going to branch out
in some unexpected arabesque this year, and if that is
what it really has in mind, I hope it does so with a vengeance.

Early this morning, - or rather not so early, but at
mail time, around 9, Aurellia came to say that Celeste had
sent her to tell me that she and Madam Regard had returned
from their travels. I was glad to see them, but I find Madam
Regard looks rather too thin. I'm afraid it is now a toss up
which will be first, Madam Regard or Miss Sally. Miss Sally
remains in bed for the most part, and poor Madam Regard finds
herself in a car, and off hand I wouldn't know which situation
would be more devastating to these particular individuals,
although I believe if I had to make my choice, I should
prefer Miss Sally's method in contrast to flying up and down
the road.

Tonight I am looking forward to giving my travels about
the Gobi Desert a rest in favor of Washington Irving's "The
Alhambra" which came to hand today. I notice it is the second
edition, which Mr. Irving arranged at Sunnyside in 1851, where
he revised his original manuscripts written while he dwelt
for a time in Grenada long about 1828 or 1832. As I recall,
he had the good fortune when visiting Grenada to be invited to
occupy a suite in the deserted Alhambra, and the book was
written for the most part while he was in residence there. It
has been so many years since I first read the book, however,
that I have forgotten many of the details, and it will be
nice brushing up on them again.

I wish old Xenophon P. Smith would hurry up and read
The World of Washington Irving for my especial benefit. Surely
for Mr. Irving, it must have been a far cry, as between the 1830's
and the 1840's, when in the former decade he was visiting at The
Alhambra while in the latter he was exploring the Wild West
in the foothills of the Rockies. I'll bet Sunnyside looked
equally good to him following each of these pilgrimages.

At supper tonight, J. H. told me he had had a letter from
Caroline Dormon, saying she was fixing to pay us a visit shortly.
From that I take it she perhaps didn't make the South Carolina
trip, although one never knows, and it is quite possible, too,
that we shall see her a year hence and not before. Both Caroline
and Carolyn are remarkable persons, but I must say I have never
yet been able to fathom their time-tables, if any....

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Sunday, February 13th, 1949.

Memorandum:

According to the Weather Man, the Cold Front, moving down
from Canada, passed through Amarillo, Texas Saturday afternoon
at 4:25. These scientific weather mongers are certainly getting
things down to a fine point. Had it been 4:30, it would have been
close enough for me.

Be that as it may, we were promised 14 degrees above zero with
much sleet during Sunday, but all day the sky has remained cloudless
and the thermometer has remained in the upper 70's. A spanking
breeze from the direction of the Gulf has been blowing constantly,
and it must have badly battered if not completely dispersed the
advancing Cold Front. I hope. And now, after first dark, it is
so warm that I have all doors and windows through out Yucca wide open,
and by the time I get ready to delve into further particulars about
Granada and the Alhambra I reckon it will require but little
imagination to make me imagine I am inhaling the perfume from
the orange groves of Andalusia.

All Sunday has been pleasant. Dan didn't come home for the
week end. Accordingly I dined with Celeste and her family and the
Payne Henrys, - roast pork, roast chicken, elegant dressing and so on.

There was much talk about an episode in Matchitoches on a corner of
two of the busiest streets. A somewhat erratic Baptist preacher from
the rural section North of the town appeared with his automobile
and a loud speaker attached, to address the town's folk. He ranted
and raved against James Aswell and his filthy book, "Mid Summer Fires".
After a goodly crowd was assembled and his harangue was drawing
to a close, he drew forth a copy of the Aswell novel, and pouring
a bottle of gasoline over it, set a match to it. The darned thing
blazed mightily for a moment and then seemed to go out. And old
Judge in the crowd, Judge Hymes, dryly remarked that if the
book were half as hot as the preacher declared, it would seem it
ought to blaze without so much assistance. The crowd guffawed. The
preacher poured forth more gasoline, and eventually the volume was
consumed.

Louisiana newspapers were advised of these odd doings, and
will carry the story, I suppose. Surely that ought to help out
sales. Now if Life could only be prevailed upon to print a picture
or two of the doings, then the Aswells should expect to hear from
Beverly Hollywood at any time, I imagine.

What with Spring in the air, we had quite a few pilgrims today.

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Mrs. Rand passed this way, too, bringing me an elegant bottle of Haut Sauterne, which has a beautiful yellow sapphire tint. I shall discover if the bouquet equals the color at some later sitting.

She had a couple of guests with her, including a Mrs. Brown from Colorado who certainly shows good sense in being in Louisiana while Operations Snowbound is going full tilt in her home State.

There were some people from South Louisiana, too, - owners of rice plantations down that way, but there were x too many people about to get to talk with them much. And before they left, Dr. and Mrs. Kayser of the Matchitoches college came bye. They wanted me to help them with some historical material about Matchitoches and the Cane River country which is being prepared in anticipation of some kind of a big festival to be held in this region this Spring. I reckon they will try to put Melrose on the agenda, but I am going to demur at that, for I have no desire to receive a million sight seers along about May or June, but I am glad to help them with setting forth some historic particulars.

While Mrs. Kayser and I were working in the library, Dr. Kayser, - an excellent photographer, - was taking some shorts about the gardens. When we came out of the big house, their black dachhund, a former gift from Melrose was sitting at the base of the cistern, gazing intently at my big yellow cat seated on the top. I believe the film recorded a couple of good shots of the two animals, and if so, I shall eventually see if you can recognize the incipient battle that transpired immediately after the camera clicked.

After the last of the white folks had left, or as they were leaving, Celeste invited me to have a bite with the Kayseres and Madam Regard at Celeste's. But I lied and said I had promised the Rands I would sup with them, and so returned to Yucca, thinking to get caught up on a couple of things. But on my gallery, I found awaiting me an old friend from little riger, - a tenant of the Mazurettes. His name is Sweet Milk Remo, in spite of his color which pales the Ace of Spades. He wanted me to summon the Cloutierville doctor to visit Madam Sweet Milk. The doctor asked me the patient's problem. Sweet Milk said she had no pain, was about the house all day but wouldn't answer him much when he tired totalk to her, - "jus asks me if 'is gwine to take the children". And that, of course, was very clear, as to her possible malady, and so Dr. Jaeger said he couldn't make it before tomorrow morning. And then the Dark Duke and Dee-Dee came, and they offered to take Madam Sweet Milk to town tonight, - and so they have all disappeared into the shadows, and we have had our little chat, and I am hoping you had a nice day, and have some Washington Irving thing, as have I, to read before calling it a day.... P. S. That flower sent in my last note was a Chinese honeysuckle, and I guess I forgot to name it.....

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Monday, February 14th, 1949.

Memorandum:

May I tell you how much I have enjoyed your elegant letter in today's post. It was next best to having a prolonged "literary evening" together.

Everything you had to tell me was news, but the best part was to learn that you and Miss Doris had an evening together, for I am sure you had many notes to compare during dinner, and many laughs to share during the performance of "Life With Mother". Especially in the hurly-burly of a vast city, such lapses from drugery are so important, and it does my heart good to know you have such a delightful outing together.

I am so glad to know about the latest twist to the Mayerling tragedy, and the next opus as laid out by Mr. Kane. From a few people who do not know Mr. Kane, I have heard it remarked that all attempts to read the Bride of Fortune have failed, for according to these people, the book doesn't read easily. As for the final years of Mr. and Mrs. Davis, the author ought to be able to sling much dirt, for the Sarah Dorsey business will undoubtedly supply him with much mud, if that's what he wants to make his books sell.

Returning to the Mayerling business, it is really wonderful how that story continues to intrigue men's minds. The effort of Francis Joseph to hush-hush the business at the time it transpired is just another indication of how much more intriguing a thing becomes when an attempt is made to cover it up. I am glad for this reason that the end of Hitler has been so thoroughly investigated immediately following his end, for by documenting everything on the spot, the matter will be removed from a heap of attempted romanticism at some later time.

It was good of you to tell me about the return trip of the Friendship Train. On the radio I heard that the ship bringing in the Thank You gifts was to dock on a certain date, but I never did hear anything else, - either before or afterward. I guess I must have been wandering too far afield in The Gobi Desert.

And speaking of the latter volume, I am intrigued by an account of a 250 acre wall city in the Gobi, long since plundered and re-plundered, so that little remains but its crumbling walls and a few of its many buildings. I don't know the name of the place, the Chinese names so frequently when spoken give me little concept of their spelling. But in this particular city, situated at a juncture of two of the old trade routes, this city flourished between 400 and 900 A. D., after which it was sacked and re-sacked by the Moslems. Fortunately some German scientists visited the place before all the libraries had been destroyed, and

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many lovely miniatures, illuminated manuscripts, etc., found their way to a Berlin Museum, as a permanent record of the high type of civilization that flourished in this remote situation so long before the advent of Marco Polo or Columbus.

And while I think of it, I want to refer to a line or two I ran across in *The Alhambra*, for the sentence or phrase may suggest a source of inspiration for an English writer of half a century later than that of our own Washington Irving. In speaking of a Prince of The Alhambra, Mr. Irving mentions how delicious was one particular spring, the perfume of the flowers, the song of the birds, etc., and says, if I remember the line correctly, "the song of the nightingale singing to his paramour, the rose". Naturally I couldn't help wondering if Oscar Wilde had read this line and was thus inspired to turn out his lovely "Nightingale and the Rose" which has delighted so many a reader down the years.

It is a great source of relief to me that my patient, Mancey Balthazar, is at long last being taken care of. This morning some children came pounding frantically at my door, saying that "that man" was running down the road in his pajamas. I caught up with the book demented thing just as he reached the store gallery, and persuaded him to sit down on a bench there for a while. I then telephoned the authorities in town, telling them they simply had to issue the proper papers to have the man placed in an institution. This time I got action and within an hour or so, after I had walked the man back home, they came and took him to a Shreveport institution. I suppose he will return in a box before the end of the week, but it is better during the interim that he be where opiates may relieve the intense suffering he is experiencing both in mind and body.

I am glad to report that the Cold Front seems to have been completely smashed by the warm winds from the Gulf. It crept down as far as some uncertain point between Texarkana and Shreveport where the warm South breezes brought it to an abrupt halt. For a couple of hours the battle ensued, with neither side gaining an inch of ground. And then the Polar masses began to crumble, and the whole assault in this direction collapsed.

The Southern breeze moved around toward the west during the day, and have been blowing constantly. This isn't a helpful element in gardening, but I made the most of the circumstances of the warmth and the promise of rain for tonight by setting out quite a bit more privet along the drive, as between the laternating pears and persimmons. I shall have to set out only three or four more items and the hedge on one side of the drive will be complete from the Bermuda Gate to the Alphonse, and I guess about half of the other side of the drive is also set out. I am rather tired tonight, but it is that pleasant kind of tiredness that brings a balm of satisfaction with the realization that a couple of things were accomplished. Again my thanks for your grand letter.....

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Tuesday, February 15th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Thirty million hearts and flowers wouldn't half express the pleasures experienced by Arenbourg on its momentary birthday.

I had to go to town this morning but didn't leave until an hour after the postman had arrived, and so, in passing Arenbourg on the way, I could suggest by a glance in that direction what new pleasures should be in store for it, and this afternoon I spent three hours in the rain on the terrace, sharing with the spirit of the place some of the joys that are awaiting it, thanks to the spirit of another who does so much to make Arenbourg embryo of happy days ahead.

While furthering the hedge along the drive yesterday, I contemplated certain other things that would be nice to get started, but I merely thought of the matter abstractedly. Today, however, the abstraction ceases and the promise of reality has arrived. I shall speak of some of these plans from time to time, but meanwhile I merely want to say how happy Arenbourg is today, thanks to you.

I have your lovely card sitting here on my desk before me, its scarlet hearts and golden filigree a joy to the eye and the heart. It is the only first class coming to hand today, and although my Ethiopian failed to appear because of the rain, I need him not, for the scarlet and gold speak for themselves and for you.

I ran in to see the dentist who took out some stitches around 11. Celeste was going in for some sort of a morning reception or coffee. I suggested she pick me up at the Worsley residence which I have never visited, and she did just that around noon. As she passed by, she saw me sitting on their elegant gallery, for neither of them were home, and so I have yet to explore their new menage. At the drug store in town, I learned from one of the lady doctor's friends that the lady is fast wearing herself out, and in order to "get away from it all", she is taking a couple of days off to rest. I was glad to learn she had determined upon such a wise course, supposing she might collapse in her house, behind bolted doors, for a 48 hour period, but I was frankly floored when I learned that she and her husband planned to run down to Galveston or Corpus Christi for the interim. "They ought to get there in just about time to turn around and head back for home, I should imagine. Isn't it a pity no one can run their business for them, when it comes to having some idea as to how to relax."

MMIC

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The enclosed clipping isn't of much interest, but does mark another twist to the Goat Castle lore. In my opinion, Dockery never married Birckery, but it is natural she should want to claim such a bond, since she would have no other claim to the property.

Her reference to the Calhoun property brings forth many an interesting tale that might be recorded about that place. It was originally a part of the same tract on which Aurubn is built. It had a lovely house, somewhat after the manner of The Briars, but much larger. The place was called Inglewood, and is almost across from Elmscourt, with only the Jenny Merrill property of Jenny Merrill lying between Inglewood and Goat Castle.

Inglewood
Following Mr. Calhoun's death, the property passed to another Natchez doctor whose son inherited it from him. The son begot two daughters who had a pretty difficult time of it, for their father treated them so badly, - they were forever flying about the place to circumvent him from committing incest on them, that they never could entertain socially, and were never invited out, - or if case they ever were, never felt they could, accept invitations. Eventually their father died, their mother having died when they were quite young, and the two girls, now middle aged, were alone in their lovely but somewhat harrowingly haunted home of their childhood and youthful years. As no one visited them, and they were timid about going out in society, they eventually accept calls from people, - or at least two gentlemen of color who had formerly lived on the place. White superiority immediately got into a lather, and the upshot of the whole business was that the girls eventually had to withdraw from Adams County. I believe they were still living there at the time la Dockery declares she was married "at the place, known as the Calhoun property", or however it is worded. I notice she is quoted as naming the people who owned the place.

But later the place was sold to Dr. and Mrs. Smith, a delightful young couple I admired ever so much. One night Inglewood caught fire and burned to the ground. Before the embers had died down, the young physician and his wife had to go into town to get some medicine the husband was having to use for some reason or other. The medicine had to be injected with a needle, and it had been the custom of the wife to assist him in the matter. Accordingly while at the drug counter, she made the injection for him, - and he dropped dead at her feet. Within a month, she had to leave for a sanitarium, for it was discovered that she was becoming a victim of tuberculosis. What a fall of a mansion and all its successive owners.

But I have gone off the track as usual, and forgive me. But do let me add how happy my day has been, thanks to you, and Arenbourg will blossom the more mightily, because of the

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MMIC

Wednesday, February 1th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Cloudy and mild today, and that made good gardening for Arenbourg. I set in some nandinas, missing from the little headage between the old house and the Alphonse line, and installed some more privet along the drive near the Bermuda gate. What with the dampness of the ground, following yesterday's rain, I think the nandinas will have an excellent chance to catch hold, while probably nothing on earth could discourage the privet from flourishing.

Today's post was not heavy, but there was an interesting letter from Miss Robina, detailing some salient points about the mulatto youth who was adopted by the Yankee and his Norwegian wife. Following the death of his foster parents, the mulatto, who inherited about twenty five thousand dollars, eventually came South where he married a black woman and raised a family. He occasionally does some work for Robina.

She remarked on reading the letter over again that possibly the story might interest Anne Parish, and as she had already spoken of her enjoyment of "A Clouded Star", she thought it would be alright if I sent the letter along to la Parish, if I cared to. I did.

My Reading Machine staggers along preciously, and I sit on the edge of my chair expecting each go-round to be the last.

A member of the Natchitoches staff of the Welfare Department which handles such business dropped in on a social call this afternoon, and I suggested that both the local office on its part and I on my own behalf might jog up Baton Rouge a little on deliveries. Fortunately, I haven't anything of particular importance to read at the moment, but it is pleasant to have the thing in operating status regardless, and I should like to read a little more from the Alhambra.

Last night I read the Legend of the Rose of the Alhambra, laid at Granada during the reign of Philip V. This recalled to mind that most fascinating of biographies, - "The Princess des Ursins", - by Caldwell, I believe, - a lady of English nationality, I believe. In the Irving book Philip plays a very minor role, but some of his curious doings, as reported in the des Ursins

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biography, are apparant in the tales of the Alhambra. Of all the characters in the history of politics and intrigue, the Princess des Ursins was the most remarkable, I guess, and it seems rather odd she should have had such scant treatment by historians. Somebody should have done a great movie or play about her remarkable career but because of the century in which she flourished and the remarkable heights she trod, I reckon no one will ever undertake the job, and probably as time goes on, she will fade further and further into the shade of forgotten personalities.

Those remarkable people, the Gages of Austin, sent me a Valentine in the form of a box of food, and I must make an acknowledgement forthwith. This shipment included cheese, Tender Leaf Tea, many cans of ripe and green olives, several kinds of salade dressing, marshmallows, something called a Chocolate Toddy, puddings and so on. If not too sleepy, I shall sample a few of these delicious things before folding up my beard tonight, but puzzled, nevertheless, that these charming people, so thoughtful and generous with their packages, never do get around to write a letter. Don't you think that odd.

The crack-pot Bible slappers continue with their broadcasts from no account stations in this general region, mostly from San Antonio, - or rather Houston. Last night, while searching for anything other than a crime story or a give-away program, I stumbled on to a baptism. The preacher admonished his listening audience to pay the strictest attention if they hoped to hear the splash of water when the communicant would be submerged, which is mildly hilarious, it seems to me. Well, I listened and heard all, plus the voluntary testimony of many of the flock who expressed their joy at having been "saved" and that their names had been "written in the Book of the Lamb". I declare, the way those half baked zealots carry on with their so-called religion over the air is nothing short of a sight. I'm certainly glad they aren't on the air at the same time comedians like Bob Hope and Fred Allen are doing their stuff, for I'm inclined to believe these bigots are almost as funny and I should feel torn between setting my dial on the major net work and these two-bit stations that are so heavily bogged down with dogmatic clap-trap.

Now that the days are beginning to get a little longer, and sun-up time is advancing, I had better start training myself to forego these religious fascinations and so find myself on the way to Arenburg before the morning star has paled. The air is so delicious these mornings and flourishing a spade so much to my liking that even at this comparatively late hour, I find myself impatient for the advent of a new day.....

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Thursday, February 17th, 1949.

Memorandum:

I am convinced Spring has arrived. Of course the black birds could be wrong, but if they are, not one of them but a million have mis-read the seasonal portents. It is wonderful to see them slide in to the bamboo hedges just before dark. Their approach just after sun down is always horizontal, and more of them dive directly into the leafy fastness than do those who hesitate for a moment on surrounding live oaks and pecanes before nestling out of sight. In the early morning before sun up, however, they none of them ever head out for the open spaces directly from their sleeping shelter, but always make a vertical dive for the branches of the leafless pecane trees before taking off for the Little and Red River areas.

I'm glad I got some of the bamboo straightened out before they blew in, for within a night or two they will have all the hedges in such hopeless confusion that it never can be straightened out until next winter's rains have softened up things a little. Ten thousand of them on a single stalk of bamboo weighs it down among the surrounding stalks. As the thing cracks and crashes under their weight, there is a vast sound and whirl of wings, as they quit the falling stalk and flutter to an adjoining one, which, in turn, crashes above the casualty immediately preceeding it, and so the matting is formed, woven into a tangle that no puzzle expert could ever unravel without the aid of an axe, and even the axe doesn't help much.

And the hordes will increase in numbers straight along until the end of April or early May, when the major portion of the host will depart, following the plough Northward gradually as far as the wheat fields of Canada, leaving behind them an astonishing amount of fertilizer, so great in strength that it will kill out half the bamboo where they have roosted, which is really fine, for otherwise, the hedges would otherwise swallow the gardens completely.

It was cool today, - a pleasant 65, with high cloudiness that made out of doors work ever so pleasant. In spite of a slight cold, I was up and abroad fairly early, and succeeded in

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furthering the privet hedge plantings considerably. I also set in some special ivy in the neighborhood of the nandina separating Units No. 2, and 3. There isn't sufficient shade there to permit the nandina to flourish, and I am setting out this special ivy in hopes that it may cover the ground, thus providing shade and moisture for these respectable members of the bamboo family which eventually, I hope, will garland our circle in that area with evergreen leaves and lovely clusters of red berries. I guess I may have spoken of this particular ivy before, - it being the type with large leaves and bearing something suggestive of the nature of the grape vine flower, - in a cluster. But the wonderful thing about it is the fact that it is said to have a temperature lower than most plants, so that dew begins forming on its leaves immediately after the full rays of the sun leave it in the summer time. Thus it is that by condensing the moisture in the air, it feeds water into the ground constantly from 6 or 7 p.m. until 7 or 8 a.m., and thereby of course providing much by way of food for other plants around whose base it flourishes. I am hoping I may have some success with it at Arenbourg, for it will not only help many of the smaller bushes requiring shade but it will also tend to discourage the average weeds and grasses from getting out of hand, once it gets established.

Well, so much for gardening, and tomorrow will be the same tune, I reckon, for I have already planned to set out many other items before sun up.

It was Knipmayer Day, and I enjoyed seeing the doctor, even though he didn't have much by way of news. He stopped to see Mincey Balthazar before coming to Yucca, and was of course surprised to find his former patient was in Shreveport. He spoke of the impending trial of the youth in town who murdered his girl friend a month or two back. I hadn't realized until today the name of the hill-billy was so remarkable, - Smith, - being the last name, with Mildred being his first name. Certainly if I heard someone speak of Mildred Smith, I shouldn't expect a murdering male was referred to. What with some of the odd names we have on Cane River, I guess one might really make some remarkable marriages, for example if Mr. Mildred Smith married Miss Elmer Johnson. Can't you just hear someone say to a guest: "Oh, Mildred and Elmer are coming over to play cards", and picture the surprise on the face of the guest when Elmer blows in with a skirt on, and Mildred arrives with a beard.

Dr. Knipmayer spoke of one of his colored patients, - a man, named Uteress Eagle, which is pretty good, but I don't know what you might make of it.

And so much for this no account letter. I'm hoping I may do a little better on the morrow. Heaven knows, I can't do worse...

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Friday, February 18th, 1949.

Memorandum:

I must say, the enclosed letter, arriving in today's post was quite unexpected.

Dr. Butler presupposes I am rather better acquainted with his domestic arrangements than I am. I assume the lady referred to is the housekeeper of his town house. Always a "Grand seigneur" how clearly has he demonstrated it in the present letter, suggesting that if I care to occupy the Jackson Avenue home, I need merely notify the person in charge.

As you may have noticed in his previous correspondence, he has never failed to express himself with restraint. Accordingly, when he, in this instance, signs himself "friend", it touches upon the unique. All ways and always punctillious and correct and unfailingly correct and courteous, he sets high store on the use of the word "friend", and it would be interesting to know how many times in his life he has addressed the word in writing.

I have made a carbon of my response, in order that you may be completely informed. In writing the letter, it seemed to me it would be lacking in tact to say merely: "Thank you. No." To occupy 1237 Jackson in the winter and Laurel Hill in the summer would be ever so nice, of course, but geared to my speed. Melrose is better than New Orleans, while Arenbourg stands for something sentimental and for someone else that Laurel Hill could scarcely counter-balance. If one were not retainable, I cannot imagine a more marvelous substitute, so far as location goes. But since there seems to be no need for considering the substituting of the one for the other, I see no point in contemplating the matter at all.

But I do think it kinder on my part in writing this good man, not to brush his generous impulse aside by seeming to dismiss the matter without serious contemplation.

I am sorry I shall be forced to post my letter of response without having it read back to me, for in composing it, I may have expressed

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myself quite differently, sentence by sentence, than I would have, had I been able to run through the whole thing when it was finished. But I shall have to take a glance on how the effect turned out when considered in its entirety, hoping against hope that the main desire shines through, - my appreciation of his kindness in thus writing.

But enough with all this, and let's get on to Arenbourg. A cloudy sky today made transplanting ideal, and accordingly I almost finished setting out the privet, lining both sides of the drive, slap around from the Bermuda gate to the Alphonse. I am glad the main outline of the drive is thus firmly set before the hot weather begins, for I haven't the slightest doubt that the individual bushes will take ever so readily. I have spaced them about four or five feet apart, - the length of a shovel, including the handle. This allows about three privet plants between each alternating pear tree and persimmon. This will leave ample space to set in nandinas between each privet plant, when and if available, and the nandina, in turn, will add additional color in winter, thanks to their clusters of red berries.

I have my hands pretty well torn up, what with a number of thorn trees, self planted, which I had to chop out. I accordingly shall do little writing over the week end, what with a couple of sore fingers wherein the thorns linger on.

I neglected my reading last night, in favor of sleep, for a slight touch of the sniffles made me drowsy, and I proceeded on the assumption that sleep is better for a cold than reading, and felt ever so re-paid for my nobility when on awakening this morning, I discovered my sniffles were all gone.

I saw Celeste for a moment about 5 o'clock this evening. She says her mother is in bed again, but that she isn't too worried because the lady doctor will come down to see her tonight. I then learned that Dr. Eleanor and her husband are back from their "rest cure", which certainly sounds extraordinary. I believe they left for Galveston or Corpus Christi on Wednesday, - certainly not before, and here they are back on Friday. I have no idea how far away those places may be, but I know New Orleans is 300 odd miles and I assume the other places are 4 or 5 hundred miles. Now my idea of an 800 or a thousand mile trip in two days, by way of taking a rest, would certainly indicate that my head needed to be examined. I guess there is nothing in the world to keep the lady from running herself sleep into a physical wreck. If only other people would let me run their personal affairs for them!

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Feb. 18 Butler

Sunday, February 20th, 1949.

Memorandum:

It's late, and although the day has been cloudless and magnificent, lightning, so to speak, struck a second time in the same place, if one might interpret Dr. Butler's letter of Friday as being in the nature of a bolt from the blue.

Saturday was a perfect day, too, full Spring and everything growing madly, with the foliage on the transplanted privet hedge not even wilting.

Between 4 and 5 o'clock on Saturday evening I received a telegram from Taylor, Texas reading to this effect:

"We are stopping by Melrose Sunday morning and hope to see you. signed J(something) and Marion Gage".

As their home is in Austin, I assumed the telegram must have been sent en route. They arrived at Melrose shortly after dinner, and we had a delightful afternoon together until perhaps 5:30 or 6 when they asked me to go to town and have dinner with them. Naturally I declined.

They are certainly lovely people, somewhere in their 40's, and although I never met them but once when they were here last April, - or rather April a couple of years ago, they somehow seem like old friends.

As indicated in the first paragraph of this note, their visit had a definite purpose. It seems they worded the telegram to read in such a way as would give the impression they were merely passing by Melrose, whereas they really had driven over from Austin, stopping in Natchitoches last night, and coming down here for the sole purpose of asking me to consider going to Austin to live. Isn't that extraordinary that should have transpired so hard on the heels of Dr. Butler's letter, and especially as the Gages and the Butlers are not acquainted.

They brought me a perfectly lovely pair of trousers, as marvelous material as one is likely to run across, - and of all things, a whole ham, thoroughly cooked and ready for slicing.

In view of other food items that have come from the same source on Christmas and Valentine's Day, I gather that vaguely

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they have in mind I am not getting enough food and accordingly are attempting to do something about it. I'm certainly glad they didn't bring any fried chicken.

Along about 3:30 or 4 o'clock, Dr. Rand and Ed Rand appeared at Yucca, - other pilgrims had interrupted things earlier, but it is always a pleasure to see the Rands, and the Gages were enchanted because they had driven over from Austin to Lafayette, La. last camellia time for the meeting of the Camellia Society, and so had been present when Dr. Rand, as President of the Society, addressed the congress, although they did not get an opportunity to meet him.

Of course I never did find out what the Rands had up their sleeve, but I assume it was invite me to have supper with them at their camp.

Among other things, Dr. Rand wanted to know if I could tell him something about the Compton Oak, as mentioned in a recent Garden magazine, as growing, among other places, at Melrose Plantation on Cane River in Louisiana. The Compton Oak is rare, and whoever wrote the unsigned article in the magazine was certainly talking through his hat, for none ever grew on Melrose. But I was able to help out Dr. Rand a little by giving him some particulars about this rare specimen, - or at least how it got its name. One night a few years ago at Laurel Hill, Dr. Butler and I were rocking on the gallery as the moon rose. The spire of a large tree came tarily out across the lunar disk, and calling my attention to the place shadow, Dr. Butler said he never knew how Miss Charlie Compton of Natchez who, so far as he knew, had never been to Laurel Hill, had unexpectedly driven up one day and announced she would like a twig from a tree she pointed out with infinite grace and verve, for Miss Charlie had brought back not only a diploma from Vassar, but everything on the cultural side that Poughkeepsie might have to offer. She told Dr. Butler, - no slouch himself in botany, that this was a rare and unnamed tree, and she proposed to do something about it, - and so she did. For bearing off the twig with her, she forwarded the same, together with particulars regarding the character, appearance and location of the tree, - to whatever the Linnean Society of America is called, in its American headquarters in Boston, and in due time, the botanical world was confronted with a newly named tree, - the Compton or Comptonian Oak, named in honor of its discoverer, little Miss Charlie, - my old Natchez friend of whom I have probably written too many times.

Well, Dr. Rand was glad of the particulars and the Gages liked the frills, and so things went off very nicely.

So much more to write, but I reckon I have written too much already, and so I shall not risk another page. I need scarcely add that to the Gages I responded with sincere gratitude, but not to encouragingly regarding taking up my residence in Texas....

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Monday, February 21st, 1949.

Memorandum:

The elephant trunks are full of water. It has rained all day, and a nice warm sprinkling it has been, too.

Something told me that even though we may get some more cool weather before Spring actually arrives officially, I would do well to finish up the clipping of various trees and shrubs on Arenbourg, and I busied myself at just that, in spite of the nice warm soaking going with it, and the sniffles that seem to have returned tonight. A good hot bath before folding up my beard for the night will take care of the sniffles, and an excellent dinner has already attended to the stuffing that is rumored to take care of such inconveniences.

While I think of it, I shall mention whom Madam Gage recalls to my mind a little, since vague resemblances to type may the better serve to establish a general concept, even though the similarity may be nothing more than the suggestion, say, of Frna Richard to Madam Egon. Off hand, la Gage recalls to mind a little the earlier manifestations of that lady once associated with the 48th Street emporior, - a lady with blond hair, rather severely arranged, who was wont to wear rather severe clothes and tortoise rimmed glasses. Could her name have been Miss Gunther, or something like that. It seems to me I recall that she put in a other appearance, in quite a different style, some time after quitting 48th Street. I am wondering if you recall the person in question and if you can set me straight regarding particulars. Was the costume she effected when we knew her at first the authentic one, or were the pearls, black satin and waved perruque the honest costume, and the former "get-up" merely a poverty pose. To tell you the truth, I had completely forgotten about this person until yesterday, and even now I can't seem to recall how it was I never got the thing straightened out in my mind unless, as may have been the case, I was engaged about that time in making preparations to visit Uncle George and Aunt Martha at Mount Vernon or some such.

Before the day really got started this morning, I had solved the matter of the ham which really had to be disposed of forthwith, what with temperatures and humidity being what they are. Puny passed by about first dawn, and I bounced the ham in his direction. Proudly he bore it away and shortly he re-appeared. He said Ex Zelma wanted to have it for supper tonight, and would I like to come over. I would. And so after J. A. and I had dined together at the big house, I struck out across the cotton fields in Puny's direction. They had invited Little King and his wife and Sara

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and Doreatha and one of their little girls. As seems to be the custom among Cane River negroes, the men all ate first and by themselves. And then, after we were finished the ladies took over. In this instance, Fugabou who had been invited, didn't show up until the ladies were half finished, and so he had to wait until they were completely fortified before he could have a go at things.

The ham was delicious, and Zelma had made an excellent potatoe salad. And there were olives, cranberries and so on. I couldn't do much by this second supper, following so closely on the heels of the one just before, but everything was delicious. Peter had been invited, too, but he declined, as he somehow got the idea Ucle Lewis was coming, and there is still some domestic matter that doesn't lend for harmony as between those two.

The best story during the dinner was Ezra's. He said he was in Alexandria one day talking with Sam Davis, a Cane River negro working in the city during the war. A woman dressed as a Gypsy, approached them and offered to tell Sam's fortune for fifty cents. Sam hesitated a moment, and then gave her the half dollar and told her to go ahead.

At the first glance at his palm, she declared:

"To begin with, I see you're going to have a heap of children....."

But before she could utter another word, Sam broke in vehemently:

"Listen, lady, you're cheatin' me. I paid you four bits to tell me my fortune, not to read me my damnation."

And Sam left the astonished seer flat.

What with today's drizzle, plantation work didn't exist, but much industry was manifest by sounds coming from the direction of the Cane River bridges. The new concrete bridge was opened for traffic without fanfare today, and work on the old "camel back" one began, - that is to say its demolition.

It isn't too happy a job the road builders did on the new Melrose-Montrose highway, for the materials were evidently so unscientificaly applied that the whole thing, including the approaches to the new bridge is a morass of mud and gravel, and it is said the whole thing will have to be done over again. Celeste was never in tears this morning, when she discovered that the fine new bridge is already for use but is impossible to cross since no one can get to it, - and the floor boards of the old one, being removed today, makes that one obsolete. It's all so fearful and wonderful. And so to a hot bath and a equally hot cup of tea and to bed.....

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February 22nd, Tuesday, 1949.

Memorandum:

According to my calendar, we should be celebrating Washington's birthday, but I guess this section of Louisiana must feel it is the business of the 13 original States to honor the Founding Father. It is my understanding the Natchitoches banks are in recess, - and come to think of it, they may remember that George Washington was one of the richest men in America, thus impelling contemporary masters of moneys to pause long enough to honor a patron Saint, but so near as I can discover, all other lines of endeavor are functioning as on any other week day.

I telephoned a member of the College faculty this morning at his residence and was told I might reach him at North Western College. I saw a flock of children coming home from the convent this afternoon, and the negro schools are droning along as usual. The postman made his usual rounds. And just to keep the record straight, I might as well admit that I carried on Arenbourg as usual.

I am glad to say that today - finished setting out the hedges bordering the drive, and what with year's dampness lingering on, with many low hinging clouds and a promise of rain in the offing, it looks as though the hedges would be thriving before the month has run out.

With the exception of two or three of the late bearing variety of pears, all the young Arenbourg ones are in full leaf, and the persimmons are beginning to bulge mightily at the buds.

I was delighted to notice, too, that the little live oaks I planted on the terrace two or three weeks ago look as though they had made up their minds to live, too, which will certainly represent some kind of a victory, what with the difficulty one always experiences in trying to get that type of tree to make up its mind.

It looks like a busy week end ahead. Did I mention that both the Baton Rouge and the Beaumont Penrys are scheduled to come for the week end, and that Payne is bringing a Mr. and Mrs. Winslow for a day's visit. The latter are from Madison, Wisconsin and are on their way to visit President and Mrs.

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Stokes of L. S. U. I must say, the Henrys are sights, for none of them still seem to know or care about learning anything of the development of Melrose, and Payne has already asked me if I will take the Winslows under my wing to acquaint them with what they ought to learn.

I asked Sam Brown today if, as Aurellia's successor, he was preparing the big house for the impending Henrys. He said he wasn't going to unless some one spoke to him about it especially. It is his understanding that he is merely to keep Dan Henry's bedroom and bath in order and that he is going to stick to that. I think I shall make no mention of the need for a bit of housekeeping, and let the guests see for themselves how things go without a housewife. And I smile to myself when I think of an episode that transpired here during the General's last visit.

The General's wife is ultra fastidious in a curious sort of way, and Aurellia took the liberty to point out to the lady that a hair receiver and an ash tray were on the dresser, when, as the lady was dressing, Aurellia noticed the lady throwing her hair combings and a couple of matches on the floor.

The lady assured Aurellia that she had noticed the objects mentioned but that she always intended throwing her hair, matches and ashes on the floor, just to be certain that the house girl did her work properly every day.

Isn't it wonderful what people can study up to make other's lives easier.

Clemence dropped by this morning and seems to be her usual gay self. She brought a couple of pictures she had recently stirred up, and this will make things handy, if and when, James Cunningham passed this way. This was the first time I had seen her since Carolyn had enclosed a gift for her in the letter to me, and so Clemence was tickled at the timeliness of her visit. I also had some trousers needing some work done of them, - shortened a bit, and so we killed several birds with this single go-round.

The Bliven book on science has a list of geniuses, rated in various categories which would be fun to run through with you. It is the results of some vast study made a few years ago by a whole battery of research workers in various scientific fields, primarily in psychology, I suppose. Goethe is way up in front, of course which appears to be alright, so far as I am concerned, but I was rather surprised to find Mozart, albeit in the list, in quite a low classification. Of course, to begin with, I don't know what a genius is, but I had always thought of mein lieber Wolfgang as pretty good.....

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Wednesday, February 23rd, 1949.

Memorandum:

Some of the school children dropped by this afternoon about 5 on their way home. I am always glad to see them and they tell me much that is or is not going on in the realm of Pedagogy that invariably holds interest.

In response to my question as to what holiday was yesterday, no one could tell me. I asked them if they talked about Lincoln last week at school. They said his birthday was on the 13th and they read about him in school. Having remembered the 13th, I tried mentioning the 22nd to see if that would bring anything to their minds. But it didn't. I then thought out the name of George Washington and they had heard tell of him, but nothing had said about him recently, they said. It is natural, I suppose that the negro pupils would be more interested in Lincoln than Washington, and yet most of the teachers are mulattoes, and they never seem to care to stress Civil War doings much, since they are descendants of slave owners and tend to carry over the resentment against the Great Emancipator that the white planters so often held following the war. I must attend a history class some day in the local schools and discover, if I can, just how that subject is presented to the children.

And while on the subject of History, I might as well remark in passing that in the list of geniuses I referred to the other day, compiled after years of research by eminent psychologists, Washington's name did appear, but Messrs Franklin and Jefferson did not. I am inclined to think both the latter have as great if not greater claim to the category, and I'm wondering how the experts happened to forget them.

The weather remains cloudy and warm so that the Arenbourg children are growing along nicely. Non-descript children, ranging from the age of 1 to 4 seemed to dominate the pilgrim picture today, and I never cease to marvel at people's courage or foolhardiness to drag such youngsters around to see old plantations. And worse still, I imagine many of the people passing this way this week are undoubtedly heading for New Orleans to frolic among the pre-lenten crowds. I haven't

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a doubt that many of the grown ups are even pulling that old line about not being interested in the thing themselves but are merely making the round for the children's pleasure.

We had expected the Winslows from Madison tomorrow, but they will not spend the day here until Friday. But this morning Payne telephoned some business associates from Fremont, Ohio, had arrived last night and he was bringing them down for dinner today. They were the Leitners, or some such name, and were as much interested in visiting an old plantation as I would be in visiting their factories. They were kindly people but definitely in the five cent cigar class, which made it nice for me, since after I had given them a tour and they had dined, they were delighted to accept Celeste's invitation to spend the afternoon at her house playing cards. Being thus freed from their society and able to pursue my own horticultural inclinations, I recalled something Lyle once said to the Madam when she expressed wonder that ladies could find so much time at the gaming table:

"You certainly ought to thank the Lord that somebody invent cards, - what with all the dull people a deck takes off your hands."

I am sorry to say that the enclosures can do nothing to eliminate the dullness of this letter. I was amused that both Miss Ette and little Miss Dornon report Melrose is so changed. The absence of the Madam certainly gives it a different complexion, but that observation is prejudiced, since I am on the ground, whereas neither Miss Ette and Caroline haven't passed this way since the funeral, so their opinions must be most hearsay.

I don't know if there is a element of irony or not in Miss Kate's appreciation of my book reviews. In truth, that is about all my letters to her consist, for knowing that she is in communication with Sister, I think it better to include no fuel for la Perkins that might accidentally get spilled over into her Wenk correspondence.

Of course I could write Miss Kate, in reference to her report that Sister is inquiring for particulars regarding her Papa, that the Madam used to declare that had she known half about the Henrys before she married into the family that became painfully evident too soon afterward that she never would have made that mistake. But perhaps that would constitute the type of information Sister is fishing for. As a matter of fact, I honestly believe Sister doesn't care a hoot about her father, for she never in her life manifested the slightest interest in either of her parents or ancestors, and I would bet dollars to doughnuts she is using the present subterfuge to induce Miss Kate to write more frequently, hoping she will pass along particulars that she herself can't get otherwise.....

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Thursday
Tuesday, February 24th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Torrential rains all morning with cloudless skies, a brilliant sun and great warmth all afternoon. In short, it is perfect sub-tropical weather, and the whole pant world seems to be responding regardless of the calendar. A swarm of bees have been buzzing around my back gallery all day, and along the front gallery, the banana plants which usually make up their minds in April, are already four or five inches tall. I certainly hope the whole shooting trap isn't flattened out by some belated cold snap.

A note from the General today indicates that the S. G. Henrys will not make it this week, which is just as well, for if the Beaumont Henrys come and the Winslows linger and Miss Kate arrives belatedly, we shall have enough, - or at least all I shall care to devote time to.

I got into deep water last night in reading on scientific subjects and so I dipped into Voltaire's *Zadig*, which is beautifully recorded in French by the same reader of Du Cote de Chez Swann. I hadn't noticed what the volume was until I put on the first record, and the mention of old Francois Aronst recalled to mind that he was another who didn't get on the list of geniuses mentioned in a couple of previous notes. I don't even know what Noah Webster styles a genius but I reckon Voltaire might be styled one alright if George Washington and Napoleon were. And mere mention of those names makes me wish I had read Voltaire's *siècle de Louis XIV* lately. I had better pen old Xenophon a line about that, too. It has been so long since I read the Voltaire account of that period that I have about forgotten what it was like. It seems to me he did remark in that work that Louis XIV was possessed of enough faculties to make four kings and an honest man, and that was really an orchid. I am not sure that an 18th century writer would find much that was set in motion in the 17th century so remarkable as would a writer of the 19th or 20th century, and especially a person of Voltaire's place in society, for I suppose they might take as a matter of course much which viewed from a longer perspective much that would seem remarkable.

I must explore Louis Bertrand's account again before long. As for myself, I find myself believing more and more that perhaps one of the great things about quatorze was that in following the generations of tumult and strife of the 15th and 16th century, he really carved out something quite new when he established

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the physical orderliness of towns and royal residences which are tremendously impressive after one considers the hurly-burly arrangements of all that went before his time by way of urban planning and park designing. I guess that must have been in mind when once before I remarked that Mozart always seemed an heir of Louis XIV, so neatly does his music exemplify the restful orderliness of the 17th century creations of the King.

I had a note from little Mrs. Murphy, the station agent at Derry, who always reminds me in appearance and panic of little Miss Alberta. Mrs. Murphy asked if she might have some banana roots and some pampas grass. I shall drop her a note saying she is welcome to both, but that she will have to point out the pampas grass to me, for I haven't the vaguest notion what she has in mind as having anything to do with the Argentine. Possibly she means Giant's Beard or perhaps Ribbon Grass or, as it is sometimes called, Cardener's Carter. But how she could get a pampas out of either of them, I wouldn't know.

Dr. Knipmeyer came on schedule this morning, in spite of the cloud burst that had been obtaining for a couple of hour previous. Having been soaked twice to the skin between 6 and 10, I received him in bath robe, and provided him with towels and butaine to sop up some of the elements still dripping from his person. He didn't have much news, but had much to say about the intensive campaign he is carrying on over the radio to persuade the Parish voters to indorse by a small tax, the plan for the new Health Center. He says nearly everyone is in favor of it, all except one wealthy citizen, Herman Taylor, who owns the local Coca-Cola company and much plantation property. Mr. Taylor doesn't believe in a Health Center because nobody will get any good out of it except the niggers, - as though, - were that true, - that weren't enough.

At supper last night there were four of us, - J. H., Dan, the Reverend McLean, a youth from Wachenitoches recently ordained and myself. In the midst of things, Dan picked up a silver ladle and looking at it intently, remarked:

"Well, how in the world did this escape. Look, it bears the initials, 'I. E.' (Isaac Erwin)."

We all got a kick out of that remark, since everything else in the silver line from great silver trays to the smallest spoons, had all, dribble by dribble, found their way to Shreveport during recent years.

I worked hard at Arenbourg today and like it, with everything in cluding the weeds, growing to mightily. I hope a cold snap doesn't catch up with us, everything is getting such a good start....

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Friday, February 25th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The weather continues to favor the Arenbourg children, - cloudy with an occasional pin point drizzle.

But since they were getting along by themselves alright, I devoted most of my time to Yucca and Melrose. I had three or four men slaughtering the advancing bamboo in the White Garden, and since some of them couldn't tell bamboo from pomegranate, I had to stay pretty close.

Then, too, there were the Winslows later in the morning, and they remained until nearly 2, after which I had to give a once over to the White and Iris Gardens to see what, - if anything, - might be left.

At the post office today, I bumped into Mrs. Napoleon Bonaparte Carter. She was high-high, insisted on holding hands, and was adamant about preparing a fine supper for me. I declined naturally. This is the first time I have seen her in such a state since Christmas time when J. H. suggested the boys saddle the dead mule for her to ride. What a bag.

I guess the enclosures are of no especial interest, although Mrs. R. B. Williams confirms my feelings of long standing that she is much too active for the wife of a wealthy attorney, possessed of five children, ranging from 6 month to 16 years.

Caroline's letter is typically Dormon. She would get quite a shock if she knew I gave the potted hyacinthes to Madam Regard who was ill when they arrived, and the Philippine lilies to the Gages who had never seen any. I am not surprised that she hasn't headed out for South Carolina as yet, and, in her usual style, one could guess right or wrong as to whether she might be intending to take off for that region.

I suppose the Joe Henrys arrive tonight, and J. H. will be back from Baton Rouge by tomorrow. On Sunday, as I understand it, he heads out for California, and so the wheel of travel spins. I certainly am glad when I don't have to get in the road long enough to get to town and back, and I reckon they would pass out if they couldn't keep on the jump perpetually.

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I have done so little radio listening of late that I am far behind in what goes on in the world, - if anything. I did hear a Columbia commentator remark last night that while he didn't propose to dwell on Mr. Truman's unfortunate S. O. B. speech, he would give a fairly large sum of money to know just what Mrs. Truman said to her husband on their way back to the White House immediately following the Pierson broadside. Of course the worst thing about the whole business is that Mr. Pierson is really a bag and will undeservedly accumulate a heap of sympathetic listeners just because the President used such inexcusable language. Although the present generation finds things of the past rather old fashioned, still I think most people would be surprised if they ever worked themselves up sufficiently to imagine George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, A. Lincoln or F. D. R. ever using such language in addressing a public gathering.

I wish I might keep awake a little longer at night, for I should like to canvas the air waves a little more thoroughly to observe the reporting by various Southern radio stations in broadcasting news covering Dr. Ralph Bunch. I haven't heard a Louisiana station refer to him as a negro, although I must say that the dominant San Antonio station, - W. O. A. I, - National Broadcasting Co., really gave a splendid and laudatory account of this man's accomplishments. I reckon most of the Louisiana stations might be too heavily staffed with hill billy types to accord any praise to a person of color. At supper the other night, I remarked upon the broadcast I had heard from Texas on this subject, whereupon Dan, in great astonishment, remarked:

"Do you mean to say Bunch is a nigger. I read the papers, but I certainly didn't know that before."

While working in the bamboo today, one of the men called my attention to the surprising number of dead black birds of the ground, possibly 6 or 8 every three feet or so. In view of the thousands roosting there nightly, perhaps this number of those who succumb is not unusual, for I guess there may be something between fifty and one hundred thousand birds concentrating there nightly. There is another fact which I haven't quite figured out as yet: - the blackbirds concentrate on the bamboo to the SouthEast of Yucca, - South West, I mean, while the other big hedge to the North of Yucca, enclosing the back of the White Garden harbors Snow birds, or Chee-Chees, as the darkies call them. So far as I know, both types of birds get along happily enough, but they certainly prefer to maintain separate residences, and I am wondering why, what with all the strength both sets have in numbers...

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February 27th, Sunday, 1949.

Memorandum:

A full-up week end, for, contrary to plans and counter-plans, - both the Beaumont and Baton Rouge Henrys came, but before touching on this week end, I should prefer first off to thank you for your elegant letter of the 22nd which came safely to hand on Saturday.

With such a wealth of information and sentiment, I know not where to begin, save to thank you for giving me so much of your holiday which perhaps should have been spent in greater relaxation on your part. Still, I must confess that the sitting meant so much to me that if relaxation had to be skipped, I am glad I was the one to benefit from your generous sharing of time and confidences.

It is good to know that you understood and sympathized, - or better that we both shared those feelings, as touched upon in your letter, referring to correspondence of a couple of years back. Like you, so do I feel that the problems touched upon in those communications are something beyond the power to depress. I can discuss them most dispassionately, so far as my own experiences go. It is well that before we learn much about chemistry, we should try to mix oil and water, for it is only by such attempts that we realize, after learning of the futility of the effort, that our intentions have been honest and therefore our consciousness are serene. With more experience that comes with the years, we ultimately realize that it is futile to attempt the oil-water combination, and that it is better to let each element naturally move in the direction of its own kind. Then it is that there is no point in water complaining about Oil or Oil about Water. They are just different and weren't designed to merge as a single entity. The years of heartbreak can then be charged off to experience and each individual, in my opinion, is free to pursue whatever avenue of the future seems best to himself.

I am so glad you have heard from Anita. It is interesting that both of us had something to write about the gypsies within the same 24 hour period. It seems obvious that from what Anita writes, that the gulf between her and the Pongs family will never be bridged. Thank Heavens the fortune teller her told Anita her fortune and did not read her damnation. After all, if she can hold on to the hope of a long journey, that in itself will be a straw of sufficient strength perhaps to keep her head above water during these trying time.

I'm so glad you got to the Theatre and that you enjoyed the Joan of Arc. And I am so glad to have particulars regarding the play you mentioned. It seems to me I read somewhere that Girardoux was poisoned in the early 1940's, but I am not certain.

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On the domestic front, we dined with eleste on Saturday, and ~~supper~~ supped at the big house Saturday night and Sunday noon, after which the Beaumonts and Baton Rouges departed. The General came to have a couple of hours sitting with me on Sunday morning, giving me details as to how the estate is being organized in settlement of affairs following the events of last November, etc. It seems Dan opposes saving Yucca, but the General is adamant about having it put back on a firmer foundation. He and Joe are determined on this point and I was glad to point out some details regarding the present status of the old residence. On leaving the General assured me the matter would be taken care of during the coming Spring.

I was glad to be able to acquaint the General with a few problems on the immediate horizon and pass along a few substantial facts regarding various family problems that might loom in the offing. He and his wife on leaving asked me to visit them for a while this Spring in Baton Rouge, but that is something that will be constantly put off, of course, since I have no desire to go visiting in that direction.

It seems the Cane River calendar for Spring is fairly full already, and I hope not too many pilgrims sandwich in between to gum up the works. Among other things scheduled for the next couple of months is a visit from the 42 top national magazines, including Holiday, Life and so on. I believe the State of Louisiana issued the invitation for these publishers to visit the State, and several of the larger cities will be their hosts. The plans for their entertainment include one day to be spent on an ante bellum plantation, and, as you have already guessed, Melrose is to be the one. There was some discussion as to how the guests could best be entertained, and it was agreed, I believe, that an old fashioned barbecue would be the thing.

I suggested that we write a personal letter to each of the expected guests, - typing it on Plantation stationery, and in extending the individual message of welcome, include a paragraph or two giving some hint as to why Melrose is generally conceded to have some unique claims to average interest. In this way, each guest will have been prepared to absorb and quicken individual interest in the place they are visiting, and for those who are concerned with historical or cultural aspects, the first impression of the place on their arrival will enhance the souvenir of the day they will carry away with them.

All in all, it looks like there is going to be a heap of wear and tear on the family hoop skirt this season, but regardless of the passing throng, I am determined to stick tight to my Arenbourg spade and hoe.....

3466

Monday, February 28th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The weather is marvelous, all blue and gold, but it's a little "air-ish", as our friends express it, for the thermometer "hoovers", as Plumette would say, around the 40's, and tonight a slight frost will nip our fine banana plants but will not harm the pears.

I spent quite a bit of time at Arenbourg, both to profit and loss. On the loss side, I seem to have planted quite a few keys which I may or may not find, but fortunately none of them were so very important.

In other objects being set out, I concentrated on quite a few butterfly lily roots by way of replacing many that last summer's dry spell eliminated. I also took some care, in setting out a particularly fine wisteria which I am hoping will turn out to be perfectly sex-balanced, for it is a fine specimen and gives promise to make a fine bush. And writing that word bush reminds me that I should have explained before, perhaps, that the several I have planted this year are all going to be bushes, - if anything. I have had a measure of luck in recent years in developing these, by keeping the tendrils well cut back, thereby forcing the growth of the plant into the main stalk, so that on reaching or approaching maturity, it presents something in appearance like unto a rose tree, having a single stalk and rounding out in the form of a globe at the top, some 4 or 5 feet from the ground.

I might add that the ones I planted a couple of weeks ago apparently have taken alright, for today I noticed they were putting out leaves ever so bravely. I hope tonight's frost doesn't knock them silly.

Later we shall plant some purple wisteria to festoon the trees on the margin of the river bank. I planted some there about the time of high water, but they were washed away. I shall make a note to order some next October so they may get well established before the Spring rises begin. Just one more word on the current Arenbourg wister: - the white ones do not have

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such large blossoms as the purple ones, although the individual flowers are fully as large, even though the clusters are not. I should say the white clusters are about 8 inches in length, being made up of flowers generally shaped like a bunch of grapes. The type that flourishes best in this region is honey sweet in its perfume. I suppose there may be some of this type in old Louisiana and Mississippi gardens but I have never chanced to run across any. Nor do I remember ever having seen any attempt made either here or abroad to make them grow in the form of little trees or bushes.

The finest purple wisteria vines I have ever seen are in Versailles and Brooklyn, -- and what a combination. The ones at Versailles are trellised along the forgotten orangery of the Petit Trianon, away off behind the Grotto which no one I ever knew had ever heard of, except Marechoux-Beaupres who was entranced on having them pointed out to him. And the ones in Brooklyn are on and over that walk leading down to the Rose Garden, in the general neighborhood lying some little distance from the park entrance near the Arch.

And that reminds me to thank you for telling me about the Macy gift of hundreds of Japanese cherry trees to Central Park. I think that is a grand idea, and it made Fred Allen's joke more understandable, -- about Gimbles giving an equal number of woodpeckers.

And isn't it odd that the cherry trees just behind the Brooklyn Museum seem always to have escaped much publicity. As I recall, they were present to the city the same time those around the Tidal Basin in Washington made their bow. It's been ever so long since I saw either collection, but if memory serves, the Brooklyn ones were not quite so advantageously placed as were the Washington ones.

and I wanted to thank you, too, for telling me about Bellefontaine at Lennox about which I know nothing. It seems to me Mrs. Vanderbilt bought the one on Long Island that Louis Sherry built a number of years ago, and I believe the Vanderbilts or another branch had one in the neighborhood of Hyde Park, although I am not sure about this latter one. The McCooks told me of it, declaring it was a Petit Trianon, but I doubt not that they might be mistaken.

I am reading Ernest Dimnet's Art of Thinking, -- and liking it. Very much to the point at the moment is his opinion that reading does not clear the mind in preparation for thinking, but that a cup of tea, for example, is excellent for the purpose. I must eventually try. So much more to talk about, but I shall fore bear for another sitting. I still am re-reading in my mind's eye your splendid letter of the 22nd, and blessing you with each re-reading, even though the original is of course, consumed, but every line of it remains imprinted on my recording heart and mind....

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Tuesday, March 1st, 1949.

Memorandum:

How nice and what a surprise to find your noble letter of the 24th awaiting me this morning.

How characteristically generous of you to urge me to give consideration to Dr. Butler's kind invitation. I think, however, that I need scarcely say that while Laurel Hill is in my estimation the grandest plantation I know, there is nothing about it that lends any weight when considering the personal element that daily for so many years past and for so many years to come makes each new dawn a joy because each day witnesses the laying of further foundations to our little Cane River kingdom where houses and lands aren't to be matched with those of the Laurel Hill domain but solely the consideration of what two hearts contrive to share with each other in days to come.

I used the words "moral obligations" in too limited a fashion, perhaps, and it might not have been clear, probably couldn't possibly have been either to Dr. Butler or to yourself. What I really had in mind when using them was the necessity I feel for carrying out some of the plans for planting at Melrose, minor projects which the Madam had thought about two or three years ago but then declined to such a point that interest in them and energy to carry them out evaded her.

It goes without saying that I was touched by Dr. Butler's kindness but knowing me as you do, you never doubted for a moment I feel certain that I would think of exchanging New Orleans and Natchez for our own little plans that have afforded us so much pleasure in formulating and supply so much promise for mutual felicity in days to come.

It is kind of you to say that you found my response alright, -- your own words were ever so much grander. It does me good to know you found them thus, for I had no one to read the letter back to me, and while I had hoped -- expressed by genuine gratitude to Dr. Butler, one interruption as I wrote the letter left me a little uncertain as to how the thing might sound, had I been able to rip it off without having a half hour break in the middle.

But if it seemed satisfactory to you, I am sure it will suit Dr. Butler, too, and so that little episode is closed, and please be assured that there is the slightest doubt in my mind as to a choice for me at Laurel Hill or for Lydia and me at Arenbourg.

3469

I shall be interested to learn how you enjoyed Salome, - an opera I have never heard, and at the moment I can't even recall an aria. I suppose this is the same piece that caused a lot of noise years and years ago when Mary Garden sang the title role. It seems to me I once had tickets to hear Ida Rubenstein do the thing in Paris, but, if memory serves, I gave a supper that night at Madame de Pompadour's Hotel des Reservoirs and spent the twilight strolling in the park with friends, which undoubtedly afforded me as much pleasure as had I rushed back to town.

Your prospectus for Saturday sounds staggering, purchases for a newly born infant, a funeral and after that a frolic on Long Island. The difference between New York and so many places is that in the city one is forever scrambling about to see what he can avoid doing, - and apparently you were having no luck.

I chanced to be at the store this morning when Celeste came for her mail. I was telephoning the Welfare Office about my Reading Machine and when I was done, she came in, and while we were alone, she read me your charming letter, which both she and I found exquisite. The lovely rose on the first page was a perfect illustration for the equally lovely lines on pages 2, 3 and 4, and I don't mind telling you that she was as enchanted with the whole business as I was proud.

to Frances Henry (Mrs. Payne Henry) came down to Melrose this evening to spend the night with Chaeste and Madam Regard. I suppose Fannie is on the road and J. H. is somewhere between here and California. They invited me over to spend the evening, but I declined, saying it was my favorite radio-listening night, which isn't true, but because I like to maintain our custom of these nightly chats, after which I like to read for a while before folding up. After all, I dined with them four or five times during the past week, so I already know everything they know that I want to although I must say it must have sounded like a slap when I told them I preferred listening to my radio to chatting with them. Frances, by the way, borrow my book about Elizabeth Key, and hasn't returned it as yet, and that is why I haven't sent it along up until now. I shall ask her for it shortly if she doesn't make up her mind soon.

The enclosed Mazurette letter is heartening but I must confess I am amazed that Ida hasn't told Charles of Aunt Cammie's death as yet. I suppose he continues his Mary Baker Eddy treatment, - or absence of any, which is one way to handle physical ailments, although I still believe God made aspirin so we could help ourselves and not be bothering Him constantly with our physical problems.

Is this Palomar telescope the one that Dr. Hofstadter was pouring the eye for about a dozen years ago. So many things left to talk about, but I'll fold, - grudgingly.

missed seeing me sometimes. She says her brother Andy, who is probably 65, has just come down with the measles, and she supposes that he and I will be having the same thing soon. The think Mama has had the measles. Heaven knows, I am afraid since she is over 65.

Memorandum: My wife and I have a new typewriter ribbon and may you tell me that you think it is about time

This present one came to hand in today's post, the sender's address being the Scott Stationery Store, Shreveport. I know not if I am indebted to little Miss Robinson or to Sister for this necessity, - and so I shall pen neither of them a line, assuming that a peep may issue from that direction, thus enabling me to avoid thanking the wrong person.

Long before this moment, you have of course read the quotation appearing above. I copied it because it is the first time I have run across a printed statement of a fact which for years has impressed me as something of a phenomenon. Frankly I can only wonder why I never saw the matter set forth so distinctly before.

Two striking examples could be cited at random from personal acquaintance: - Lyle, a newspaper man, who loved best to write about Creole personalities and ways of life in New Orleans and Louisiana, although he never ceased to learn anything at all about the race, parentage and environments which brought forth this type of civilization; the ignorance of the latter obviously depriving him of a true and adequately well rounded concept of its value and meaning.

And not that it is necessary to mention another, but tossing one in for good measure, there is Barnett Kane, also a newspaperman who struck out with a study of Huey P. Long, whose career and contrasts could scarcely be comprehended in full if his recreator in book form knew nothing of the ruins of Louisiana's economic and social life on which the Long regime conceived and flourished.

But I see I am turning this Memorandum into a book review, and I had better turn to something else or you will be justified, as is Miss Kate, in referring to my communications as literary discussions exclusively.

The weather is marvelous, the sky cloudless, with a brilliant sun all day, in spite of cool thermometer readings in the 40's, and tonight a slim, velvet crescent in the Western sky.

Aurelia came to see me today. She said she thought I might have some buttons that needed sewing on or some mending that needed her attention. Being home all the time these days, she said she

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On their way home from school, several children from down Clemence way stopped in to see me. They were bubbling over with details regarding the people and costumes they had seen in the road yesterday.

Everyone in this locality refers to a person in costume at this pre-Lenten season as a Mardi Gras. It seems a little odd, and were they logical, I suppose they would call people dressed as Santa Claus at Christmas time a Christmas.

The results of a mind which inclines to translate French or English words back into the main current of the sentence structure, inclines to be hilarious. For example, when one of the boys said:

"I saw a wonderful Mardi Gras by Sammy's store yesterday",
the mental picture in my mind ran

"I saw a wonderful Fat Tuesday by Sammy's store yesterday," which is certainly ridiculous.

But making Tuesday a person reminds me that I never have heard of anyone name a child after the day of the week. There are plenty of children named after the months of the year, however, such as January, March, April, May, June and August.

I think I mentioned that a Picayune writer ~~has~~, named ~~Meigs~~ Frost, has a sister named April Frost.

And that starts me to thinking of that family of Pittsburgh, Pa., named Thaw, of which Harry K. Thaw was the most notorious member. Wouldn't it have been odd if that family had named an offspring January, and later in life one had read in the social columns that "January Thaw was April Frost. But obviously I am getting sillier and sillier, and had better break off forthwith.

I spent time both in the morning and afternoon at Arenbourg, where, thanks to the cool breezes, I could work with the greatest abandon without minding the exertion.

I keep a eye on the mimosas to discover when the first leaf begins to unfold. Up to now, like the persimmons, they are hesitant about sticking out their necks, but the swellings along the twigs indicate that it wont be long....

Swellings along the twigs indicate that it won't be long....

Thursday, March 3rd, 1949

Another all blue and gold day, with a pleasantly cool breeze, and the spade flying madly at Arenbourg as I loosened up the earth around many a crepe myrtle around the semi-circles of the "elephant traps", and let a bit of sunshine into the ground surrounding the mimosa trees.

I returned to Arenbourg after dinner and worked until nearly 4 o'clock, when tired and sweaty, I returned to Yucca where I jumped into a bath and then some fresh clothes, to feel fit as a fiddle when Mrs. Rand quite unexpectedly, tapped at my door, bearing a bottle of elegant Apricot Liqueur (spelled curiously enough), for me.

It seemed like quite a while since I had seen her and I was glad to chat for a little while with her before giving a brief tour to a couple of rather dull bags she had in her train.

She didn't have any special news, except that Miss Emily Whittington had died and was buried last Saturday. I may have mentioned Miss Emily before. She was a resident of Alexandria, and Miss Sally of Magnolia was her god mother. Miss Emily was famous for two things, - her remarkably deep voice which amply filled the church where she sang, - and the equally powerful cigars she smoked. In short, she was a sight.

The enclosures aren't particularly interesting, but they do keep you in touch with the passing show. Perhaps Sister's might warrant a little elaboration, partly on my part, partly on hers. Her inquiry regarding the Montrose Road suggests we might be honored shortly. Her reference to J. H. being in good form indicates that he must have put over his mission in calling on her, which, according to what the General told me on Sunday morning, had to do with the signing of some papers in settlement of the estate which, it was hoped, but not certain, that she would sign. I gather J. H. must have put that one over.

As for the invitations to visit Shreveport and to spend three days in St. Francisville with her, I'll let you answer that one, but what to observe about her final salute: "Love to each of you", I wouldn't know about that. My old friend the airdale, is visiting, so she can't mean him, and she doesn't like my cats, so they obviously can't be included in the "each of you", so I'll just let the whole thing flicker without attempting to understand it.

...love to each of you" department.

3473

I read something more in The Art of Thinking, - a reference to Mme. de Recamier, - which made me want to undertake reading a biography of that lady. It seems to me Edouard Herriot, - of all people, - did one of her in the mid 1930's, but I never did read it. Perhaps I had better write to old Xenophon P. Smith about the matter.

The point Dimnet was making was to the effect that some people inspire people to emulate them and so by that sheer act of living accomplish something more than one who creates fame by writing, orating or whatever. And then he asks why it is, - if indeed it isn't just that, that people pause to absorb a portrait of Mme. Recamier and pass by that of Mme. de Stael.

Personally, I think there is another answer, quite different from the answer suggested by Dimnet in posing the question. For myself, at least, I never thought Mme. de Stael was very successful in getting a pretty portrait painted of herself. Perhaps the lady wasn't very pretty to start with, and no artist she selected was successful in making her look fascinating in oil. On the other hand, from my most tender years, I always loved the portraits of Mme. Recamier, probably because she herself seemed pretty, and because the artists who painted her, - at least the ones whose work I knew, were ultra successful in making her pretty and charming and appealing all at the same time. Was it LeGros who did the one that was exhibited in America a few years back. Whoever did that one, certainly made a striking picture. And I always loved the one by David, it is so simple and lovely. I suppose our girl friend, Mme. Vigee-Lebrun must have done both ladies, too, but strangely enough I am a little vague in my mind as to how these ladies fared at her recording. It seems to me I remember a de Stael portrait wherein this daughter of old Neckar was fitted out in some kind of a turban, but I am uncertain as to the artist. Well, anyway, none of this matters, and yet the fact that I have spun out such a long paragraph about it indicates that Dimnet was successful in making me reminisce even though he didn't actually succeed in making me demonstrate anything about the Art of Thinking.

Today was Knipmeyer Day of course, but the good doctor didn't have much by way of news. He was entranced that on Tuesday the Parish voted to appropriate money, matching the State and Federal appropriations, to build a new Medical unit in Natchitoches where his office and staff will be housed. Next Tuesday this War, - No. 9, - will vote on eliminating Prohibition, and I can't tell for the life of me which way I want the vote to go. The Melrose Social Club dispenses liquor and gaiety on both Saturday and Sunday under prohibition, while, it is said, if prohibition looses and the Club becomes a saloon, it will really have to remain closed on Sunday, - and then what in the world will all my friends have to do. Life is so confusing, and not only, it would seem, in the "Love to each of you" department....

3474

Friday, March 4th, 1949
This person, Philip, said that every time he was heading for the river he was reminded of some of Betsey's letters. His 11

Memorandum:

One of his reasons for not going to the river was that he was afraid of the spade flying in consequence, assuming that a drizzle or a shower cannot be too far in the offing, and the first drop, on arriving, will sound the sweeter falling down my chimney, since I will be assured that the Arenbourg children are guaranteed a first rate drink, what with all the weeds and grass removed from their immediate surroundings.

If tonight's cloudless sky still obtains at tomorrow's dawning, Peter will get out a big tractor and disk the drives and Unit No. 2, and the terrace, thus discouraging all the greenery that has already started growing mightily in those places.

Today's pilgrims were few in number, but of quality. I suppose this week end we shall get quite a few, what with people returning North from the New Orleans Mardi Gras, and Texas people heading to or from the Matchas pilgrimage, which, I assume, has already begun, although I have heard no publicity covering this year's festivities.

Among those in the Northern trek were four very charming people from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. During the Winter I can get their Des Moines station, and it rouses my interest in the State, and so I was glad to exchange Louisiana particulars for Iowa ones.

I have heard it said that Iowans are inclined to be rather State-conscious, and I must say today's pilgrims seemed a little incredulous when I expressed my enthusiasm for certain Iowan qualities and genuine interest in the history of her development, but when I began asking them about the latest wrinkle in their hybrid corn culture and reclamation work going on in the wake of last summer's devastating floods around a Steamboat, they appeared convinced that I had at least heard of their native heath. It is a pity they didn't seem to know a thing about Louisiana. What with all of Mr. Roosevelt's elegant Federal Guides, it seems ever so odd that Iowa people should head out to do the Pelican State without bothering to learn something about it. How in the world they stumbled on to Melrose, Heaven alone knows.

The trial of Mr. Mildred Smith is going full swing in town, and they say the Court is jammed with curious ladies dying to hear the dirt about the love affair between the married lady and the youth who "slew her" because, when I put my hand in my pocket, I felt that my knife was open, and so I just cut her neck.

There is another story out of Natchitoches which has to do with a 60 year old man who tried to drown himself in Cane River one day this week.

3475

This person, plump, bald and 60-ish, came to the conclusion that everything, man and beast, conspired against him, and he frankly stated to some friends he was heading for the river "to end it all".

One of his acquaintances, fearing the man might carry out his threat, circled the parked esplanade along the river front to keep an eye on the depressed soul, and watched him for some time behind a tree as the poor thing approached the margin of the river.

But apparently the would be suicide had a change of heart, what with all the sunshine and the gaiety of a million birds busy in the trees preparing their new nests. In any event, the poor man decided apparently to "talk it out with God", and accordingly moved over to the tree wherein the birds were busy and his friend was concealed. Reaching the shade of the tender new leaves, the man placed his hat on the ground and knelt down to pray God to give him strength and to convince him that in reality the world was all against him. But, unfortunately, at just that moment, one of the birds above him, responding to a cosmic urge, let a dropping fall slap on the bald pate of the kneeling figure, whereupon the suppliant, raised his eyes to Heaven and wailed:

"You see, God, how it is. Birds sing for other people...."

and getting up, he headed for the river and jumped in. But Cane River isn't deep at that point and his friend who had been behind the tree, had no difficulty in fishing him back to shore, and so home to his family. Of course once freed of his responsibility, his friend couldn't get back to his cronies and they say the whole town is giggling whenever, as frequently happens, someone says: "You see, God, how it is."

I answered the one by saying that I am still laughing in my beard at the trick Fate played in the seating arrangements. To Cousin Lucy, I shall pen a line or two tonight, setting her straight on a couple of points, for it is obvious her question about the care, if any, being given to "Cousin Cam's" antiques was inspired by something outlandish Sister has been stirring up.

I understand the March 22nd is the date Melrose is to entertain the 42 editors of national magazines, - and their wives, - and husbands. I suppose, assuming that some of the editors may be ladies. What with the several State officials plus the usual number of "lousey fringe" we shall probably have more than a hundred. The Madam used to quote an old story about a peasant and his wife - facing some disagreeable chore on the following morn. On retiring, in hopes of avoiding his share of the task, the peasant remarked: "I'm getting sick", to which his wife rejoined: "I'm sick now".....

This week.

A 60 year old man who tried to drown himself in Cape river one day

and his story about waterloches which was to do with

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In turning this page, it occurs to me that I made a
 dessert out of the dessert, but while that may be stretching
 the point a little, I must admit I had no difficulty in doing
 Sunday, March 6th, 1949.

Memorandum

Full Spring is upon us, and as if to confirm the fact, as though confirmation were needed, vast squadrons of wild geese are passing overhead daily, and perhaps because of the slender moon to light them on their way the flocks disregard the setting sun and keep on traveling, honking bravely through the night.

Both Saturday and today were fairly busy, and I liked them. Before daylight I picked up an early news broadcast, one item of which had to do with the British Government pinning an award on Major General S. C. Henry, the ceremonies scheduled for Saturday afternoon aboard a British ship standing off Baton Rouge in the Mississippi River. Perhaps there may be a clipping covering this business later.

At first day, Peter passed this way with a big tractor and a heavy disk, for Arenbourg had decided to invest a bit of birthday money in putting things to rights in preparation for spring, and the day was perfectly laid out for the task, as it looked ever so nice when completed, and possibly we shall repeat the performance a month hence to keep things in line and to afford greater breathing space to the things the weeds might otherwise tend to hold down.

It is exhilarating to see how nicely leaves are putting out, and with the winter slumber period at an end so early this year, I am convinced that everything has an excellent opportunity at maximum growth during the ensuing weeks when the greatest amount of moisture will be present to give the re-awakened plants the where-with-all to climb skyward.

Sunday has been unusually warm and a parcel of dumb pilgrims in the morning. - friends of an enemy, - made the humidity seem even more oppressive.

We dined a little later than usual today, and no sooner had I returned to Yucca than Ed and his wife tapped on my door, saying the family was at the camp, expecting me to dine with them at 2 o'clock. Their table was laid on the gallery high above Gane River where the sultry atmosphere gave way to a delicious breeze that harmonised elegantly with the iced punch and frozen deserts in which I participated.

3476

3477

In turning this page, it occurs to me that I made a desert out of the dessert, but while that may be stretching the point a little, I must admit I had no difficulty in doing away with all the luscious stuff coming before me.

Ed Band brought me home and picked up some banana roots to plant along the margin of the river at the camp. I ordered a couple grandiflora magnolias from him for early delivery, and I am hoping this order gets through more readily than a former one.

It's curious how scarce small grandiflora magnolias are. We could readily use 4 or 6 more at least at Arenbourg, but a mere couple of them seem to be something to sigh for, let alone twice that number.

Ed Band says he thinks the shortage is due not only to the large demands for all plants during the boom times of 1945, 1946 and 1947, but also because during the first half decade of the 1940's, the florists found themselves so short of labor that they just weren't able to plant items which, under normal circumstances, would now be on the market.

I got quite a bit of reading done last night, in fact I just about read myself out of library stuff momentarily. The concluding chapter of the Bliven book was rather good when the author complained that the layman tended to disregard many a scientific approach to many a problem that in light of new discoveries, science could assist so much in solving, while, on the other hand, the Scientist himself, so thorough in his own particular branch of science, too often tended to be hood-winked by tons of humbugery still dominating other phases of life. The author estimated the average Scientist devoted from 5 to 10 per cent of his day to a scientific approach to his problems, and accordingly could not complain if the layman manifested even less real grasp of subjects definitely beyond his primary concern in making a livelihood. He also, in a passing phrase, referred to the year 1859 as the great date in contemporary scientific advancement, but quite unscientifically neglected to point out what was so magical in that year. It seems to me old Darwin's theory appeared sometime in the 1850's, but I was thinking it was about 1853. Be that as it may I still don't know what actually was discovered in 1859 which makes that year the 1492 in the realm of Science.

The enclosures are not important but rather gay, but may serve to keep one abreast with climatic conditions to the North and North West...

3478

3478

Memorandum:

To hand your grand letter of the 2nd, and it goes without saying that I have enjoyed our nice chat no end.

Your pen picture of Central Park under snow was exquisite. Somehow there were two or three phrases that recalled John Greenleaf Whittier's "The First Snow Fall," I believe it was called.

I don't remember how the poem goes, but some of the lines, thanks to your happy choice of words, brought back many of the delightful vignettes arising in one's thoughts as one reads of the poet's account of the rural scene. I think the poem begins:

"The snow, it fell in the gloaming,
And busily all the night....."

and further along there is something about it being piled up on the farm buildings:

"From shed's new roof of Carrara,"
and then a reference to the branches and twigs being draped in "ermine too dear for an earl".

Somehow your account and Whittier's impression made a composite picture in my mind and I find myself, in spite of the warm breeze blowing from the Gulf, almost transported back to your neighborhood.

I'm so glad the chocolate pie came up to standard. Do you, too, enjoy it especially with a glass of cold milk. It seems to me that the one always intensifies the value of the other.

And all in one bundle, let me thank you for acquainting me with so many literary pieces of information. The Times and the Tribune Book Reviews continue to come, but as during the past 2 or 3 years, there has been no one to acquaint me with their contents. Celeste isn't interested in such matters and I must concentrate on letters whenever a reader is available. I understand an invention has already proven itself practicable that will, by an electric eye, read the daily paper printed on a sheet of paper, and the same can be read over and over again. I shall be glad when old Xenophon does something about that for then I may be able to get into the proper swing of things.

8748

3479

In the mean time, I welcome your thoughtfulness in keeping me abreast of things.

What a pity hearthside vulgarities prevented you from hearing the New Orleans broadcasts as of Mardi Gras Eve. Some of them were very interesting, and one especially would have appealed to you. The announcer devoted himself exclusively to going from block to block along Royal Street, touching on the parade incidentally but focusing his attention primarily on the stories of the historic old houses the parade itself was passing. It was really an education in "Fabulous New Orleans", and I know you would have loved it.

And thanks for telling me of the Lake Success broadcasts at 7:45 my time, over Columbia. I think I cannot get it at that hour, for there is some Bible slapping going on at that time over all local stations. But if I remember to tune in, I do hear Harry Lesseur on a 15 minute summary at night, around 9:45 or 10:45, but I have forgotten which night. Perhaps it is a re-broadcast of your Sunday morning program. Should you see his name in connection with a night broadcast, - assuming mine isn't re-broadcast, I should be glad to get the day and hour firmly fixed in my mind.

As the Winslows were Wisconsin bred and born, I suppose they are not kin to the author of The Dwelling Place. How nice to know the lady has written another book. If I can ever find her address, I shall drop her a little line, for there was some correspondence a few years back, and I am sure she would be interested in events transpiring here during the past winter.

Surely your week end, last past, has been an enervating one, and tonight I am hoping you are able to collapse a little and do nothing save a bit of radio listening or some such. And I shall be so glad to learn how Erika got along in Washington, and quite aside from the wished for prize, the outing is bound to have afforded her a change and ever so much pleasure.

I had not heard of the article you mention about the death of the Gunther youth. I believe Celeste subscribes to the magazine you mention as carrying the article, and I shall try to engineer Madam Regard into reading it to me some day when she is alone.

I went to town with Celeste this morning. Spring was all over the place and for the first time I crossed the new Melrose bridge and viewed with regret the emplacement of the old departed structure of yesteryear. The Agueleras, - the dentist, - was bubbling over with Mardi Gras doings, for they are just back from the Crescent City. But I did no busy with him, but will try again next Monday after further Baby Snooks massages. Quite by chance I bumped into Dr. Eleanor on the street and thought she looked unusually sweet, - a little too thin, in fact. She seemed gay, however, but, I think, is looking forward with not much enthusiasm to the approaching visit of her Carmel, California friend, which is quite understandable, what with all she carries on her shoulders. So turns the world, and I could talk for hours longer, but will spare you the pain until the morrow. And again my thanks for your rare letter....

next to the last stamp

3480

Tuesday, March 8th, 1949.
Memorandum;

It is humid, warm and cloudy, with a promise of rain before morning.

I made the most of today's comparative dryness by spade work around all the crepe myrtles along the circle, separating Units No. 2 and three, - don't you love that, - making the numeral for 2 and writing out three.

Foolishly I trimmed the privet hedge to the south of the Alphonse Gate, bringing it down from its 8 or 10 foot height to about 5 feet, and the foolishness enters because I was without gloves and the somewhat prolonged task with rather stiff shears put some fine blood blisters on my left hand.

But the labor was timely, for tonight's shower will bring a spurt of growth to the crepe myrtles, thanks to their greater drinking ability, and the hedge will push out a new batch of leaves at the base of each bush instead of at the top.

Yesterday, while in town, I learned that the College had had a dance recital on Saturday night, given by a group of people under the direction of somebody by the name of Graham. I asked if it could have been Martha. It seems that it not only could but was.

And that set me to thinking of the days long ago when Martha Graham had an apartment on 53rd Street, (South side) between Madison and Park. She had the front apartment, - there were two to the floor, and Rita Haldi, who was then Rudolph Valentino's favorite vampire, had the back. I used to go to Martha's sometimes, and we used to have quite a lot of fun, for there were usually quite a few intelligent people dropping in.

At the time she was very much interested in bringing the dances of Bali to the stage, and had assembled quite a group of youngsters, adept at supple arm, hand and finger motions, so requisite in Polynesian terpsichore performances.

Formerly Martha had been with Ruth St. Dennis and Ted Shawn in their school of the dance, and well do I remember how distressed was Martha one day when she took some of her pupils down to the Dennishawn Studio. It happened that Ted was then preparing for some sort of a Grecian or Garden of Eden dance, requiring nothing but a fig leaf or a bunch of grapes for a costume. While Martha was talking over old times with Ruth, Ted set Martha's students to fashioning a wooden bunch of grapes for him to wear in his approaching performances, - at Lewisham Stadium, if I remember correctly.

084E

3481

Several of the youths and maidens, intent on pleasing Mr. Shawn, took a hand at carving a grape or two from the block of wood. But as none of them had ever carved anything before in their lives, they ended up, - each of them, - by looking like something just arrived for a First Aid session on the Western Front, so mangled and bleeding were their hands and fingers.

Martha was grieved that their own dance program would of necessity be held up because of their injuries, but all is fair in love and art, and since the casualties were in the cause of the latter, all was passed over with good grace.

But what was everyone's consternation and regret when Ted, thinking to divert his guests by trying out his new dance on them, started to affix his new costume, only to discover, in spite of all the gore expended in his behalf, that the darned thing was too small, the youths and maidens above mentioned, having failed to take proper measurements for said costume.

A panic ensued, of course, and everyone ended up by rolling on the floor and Martha finally gathering up her "blessures de la guerre", and sneding them off to their respective homes to nurse their wounds assiduously, so that the Ball business might get under way again.

Had I known Martha was in Natchitoches on Saturday, I should most certainly have invited her down for dinner, so that we could laugh over this episode and other somewhat curious events that characterized her career in those days.

Of the enclosures, they aren't very interesting. The Goat Castle thing adds nothing to that sad tale, going through what appears to be its last rigors. The Pilgrimage publicity merely serves as evidence that for once, the Times-Picayune came through with front page stuff. I may have written "one", while intending to write "ones", for the Picayune in the past hasn't been too generous with its broadsides for the mansions. Possibly the undoubtedly dull editors in the past have hoped the annual migrations, if not reminded of Natchez, might flit slap through without pause until they could perch on the Crescent city.

I laughed in my beard at the opening paragraph or two of La Lake's letter. I think I raised a mild eyebrow before when she wrote me asking if she might contact the ladies, - Mesdames Worsley and Aswell, and in responding to her letter I skipped any reference to the matter. And so, it would appear, the lady took pen in hand on her own hook, - and got precisely nowhere, which, if I may say so, serves her quite right. She's a good egg, but she was not cut out for the Natchitoches ladies, and in avoiding mention of her request, I hoped to deter her advances, thus saving her a re-buff, and at the same time preserving the ladies from feeling they must receive someone who would not lend enchantment to household already bogged down with business affairs and an engulging demand of too many other people. So much for this little chat, but I shall go right on thinking after this last line closes....

3482

Wednesday, March 9th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The Arenbourg children got a splendid drink today, which was exactly what they needed.

I spaced madly until about 8:30, and succeeded in getting the task I had set out for myself just before the first drops began to fall. It was warm and as the intensity of the rain increased, thunder began rolling noisily out of the North, and kept its mighty drums beating for about 3 hours. A cool wind then took over, brushing all the clouds away, so that a brilliant sun could add its element to making things grow for all they were worth. I am enchanted we have had such a fine program and shall be impatient until tomorrow's dawn gives me an opportunity to gloat over the progress.

The Welfare Office in town sent one of its representatives out this morning to look for my lost reading machine, shipped from Baton Rouge a couple of weeks ago. It was finally discovered, where it had been resting for the past twelve days, - the the Express Office at Bayou Metes. It seems odd I failed to get a notification of its presence there, - if one were sent. Both the postman, Mr. Kelly, and the clerk, Teddy, are at the same office everyday, too, and how the thing succeeded in hiding itself so long seems ever so odd. But here it is at long last, and while it plays alright, it still isn't perfect, for there is a vague suggestion of a sound, like the tapping of a pencil on the cover of a book, which recurs about every 2 seconds. But the sound doesn't worry me and I shall keep the machine until a better one comes to hand, thankful I am able to get caught up a little in the literary department.

I guess there's nothing special in the enclosures. After all the talk about "Artha Graham in yesterday's Memo, it seems a coincidence that she should have turned up so soon again in Rudolph's letter.

The Shreveport letter appears to be of the usual order. She certainly is a persistent bag, but I'm glad she omitted mention of possible visits on my part. I was surprised she mentioned the General, for her hatred of him surpasses all bounds, so that her slight crack at him in her letter seems ever so restrained.

J. H. telephoned from California this morning. He says he is having a fine time exploring "the Valley", - meaning the Imperial Valley, I suppose, where some cotton is raised possibly, although I believe in small amounts compared with fruits. He thinks he might return to Melrose along about Monday.

Celeste plans to head out with her Mother for New Iberia on Friday. They plan to visit Celeste's former sister-in-law for a few days.

What with the General and his wife scheduled to be here on Friday night, he will find the house next door comparatively lonely. I believe he plans to skip up to Shreveport on Saturday morning, returning here for Saturday night and Sunday, and I am glad we shall be comparatively alone, for it is always a great pleasure to chat endlessly with him.

On my return, - a drip, from Arenburg this morning, I found three boys waiting for me on the front gallery. As it was school time, and "little River was a couple or three miles away, I was surprised at seeing them. But they explained that their teacher had excused them for a couple of hours to let them come up to invite me to a party the Rosenwald school is having tomorrow night. They said there would be a pretty moon if I wanted to walk but that "Mr. Dee-dee" said he would come out in his truck and get me if I would rather ride. It was certainly kind of them to send me the message by these three children, - and why it took so many to deliver it, I can't imagine, but I'm quite sure there were plenty of volunteers, - what with the opportunity it afforded the bearer to be in the big road instead of in the school room for a couple of hours. It is just a detail that five or six tractors from up here pass the school house twice in the morning and in the afternoon, and a note could easily have been sent by anyone of a half dozen drivers. But I like the way the school handles its social amenities and while I shall probably not get around to go to the party, I shall certainly be the happier for the invitation, and shall stir up some kind of a prize, probably in the form of candy, which can sweeten up the frolic for the little ones.

I am sorry to affix the last stamp to this Memo, for I have enjoyed tearing one off from the sheet every day, and seeing what flora or fauna would turn up from day to day. I think I shall write to the Wild "life people, suggesting that they might do well to issue these things monthly, instead of annually, for I imagine quite a few people might welcome an opportunity to use them more than for a few days at one season of the year. I think I shall suggest 4 issues at least, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, don't you think so.....

Thursday, March 10th, 1949.

Now I, too, I'm writing a little earlier than usual, at that uncertain hour when it is difficult to determine if the light in the sky is from the lingering sunset or the increasing brightness of the moon. Be that as it may, the bamboo hedge is as black and seemingly as thin as a white silhouette, while across the sky just above it run constant horizontal black streaks, - belated blackbirds heading in for the night. And from the hedge itself rises something akin to an amplified buzz from a bee hive. I suppose I suppose every feathered son and daughter, too busy worm gathering during the day, is making up for lost time in comparing of notes and exchanging gossip. It's really a wonderful spectacle.

But speaking of spectacles, I assume the above paragraph may well be one, too, for three times I have been interrupted by tappings at my door, - youths heading out for the party on the Little River, and asking me to join them. It would be a little splendid night to go, - what with the thermometer at 60 and the sky cloudless, but I have decided to remain at Yucca, not so much because I indulged in quite a bit of physical labor today, but more because I want to be a-stir by dawn on the morrow, and I shall arise to the occasion with much better grace if I fold up early tonight. To me there is nothing quite so zestful at this season of the year as to be swinging a hoe on the terrace at Arenbourg before sun up, - and so I am leaving the social whirl on Little River to the care of my colored friends and the one moon tonight.

Today was Knipmayer Da., of course, but the doctor wasn't up to his usual standard, suffering, as he is, from quite a head cold. As I walked with him to the front gate, I was impressed when he paused for a moment by a 12 or 15 foot tree, and remarking that he thought it was dead. Pulling the 4 or 6 inch trunk toward him, he got the surprise of his life when the thing suddenly gave way at the roots, flinging the surprised doctor slap on back on the ground, and the young tree falling right on top of him. I helped him up and he assured me laughingly that he felt none the worse for wear, but if he was half as surprised as I, he certainly must have been a little shocked.

During the heavy snowfalls in the mid West this winter, I assumed the Missouri River might go on a rampage this spring which might, under the emergency, get a Missouri Anarchist swarmed through congress, but from where I sit, it looks as though nothing is going to get through that summer body this season.

3485

The newspapers got a break today in having such an unexpected train robbery. to report, not to mention the lady in California who heard her son-in-law shoot his wife, a friend and himself in a London Terrace apartment, - the telephone communication between New York and California not having been disconnected. Doesn't it seem odd that the New York police should have been advised by a telephone from California that murder had been committed in Manhattan.

And as I heard these entertaining bits of skullduggery, I was struck by the fact that so often the radio does a great song and dance about some event or other, harping on the thing for days on end, - and then, with what strikes me as unusual swiftness, forgets the whole thing and never mentions it again. Invariably I listen to early morning news broadcasts and nightly ones around 10 o'clock. Last week there was much to do about an airplane flying from Hawaii to Teeterboro, New Jersey, or some such place on the Eastern shore. I kept up with the plane on its passage as far as Iowa or Illinois when the pilot reported he had but 70 gallons of gas left, but hoped to make his destination. That was in the morning and at ten o'clock that night, in news reports I listened to ment (mentioned) the out come. I listened the next morning but heard nothing. Today I inquired about the final outcome from the two clerks at the store and from Dan at supper tonight, but none of them could set me straight on the point. Surely it doesn't make a particle of difference to me in the general scheme of things, but it does seem odd that the ether waves, so heavily sur-charged with one subject at a given moment, can so completely skip the subject and apparently not even the newspaper readers care to follow the thing through.

If the margin to the right seems a little more wavy than usual, don't be alarmed. It indicates nothing except the fact that when I turned this page, the electric current was cut off, and except for the afterglow or the moon glow outside, one proceeds mostly by intuition. With neither the radio or the reading machine to distract me, I certainly should have no trouble in getting plenty of sleep tonight.

During the war, I remember six days in a row in mid summer when we were without current, an Army plane having clipped the high power line mid stream over Red River. The only three institutions locally doing business after dark were the garage, the Church and the saloon. The garage solved its problem by folding up at sun down. The Church held services by candle light, while the saloon kept a kerosene lamp lighted on the bar, but served all the customers on the gallery, where, thanks to the full moon fortunately obtaining at the time, and the fine view of Cane River and the bridge, the whole business took on a charm it never experienced before or since.

During the heavy snowfalls in the mid West this Winter, I assumed the Missouri River might go on a rampage this Spring which might, under the emergency, get a Missouri Authority crammed through Congress, but from where I sit, it looks as though nothing is going to get through that august body this session. Oh, for another F. D. R.

3486

Memorandum:
I am sorry to learn that one Memorandum failed to reach you. I am hoping it has come to hand subsequently. Perhaps I mentioned recently that Robina spoke of receiving letters from me, respectively dated February 28th and March 2nd, which reached her true hand on March 4th. This seems to be part and parcel of the Reading Machine business, wherein the latter sat for two weeks in the Hatcher, La., office, a apparently forgotten. Certainly I shall hold the thought that the Memorandum wasn't lost along the wayside.

For fear it has, however, and since it must have touched upon the Butler matter, - Laurel Hill versus Arenbourg, I shall run the risk of repeating myself. I believe I mentioned in response to your letter how genuinely appreciative I was to receive your characteristically generous expressions of disinterestedness, and that you hoped I wouldn't be biased by real estate matters in determining the matter. I expressed myself unfortunately, possibly, in the letter to Dr. Butler, in using the phrase, "moral obligations", or some such. Had I not tried to keep the letter in the same brief vein as the Doctor's to me, I should have explained that such obligations were plans I wanted to carry out to effect some of the planting at Melrose which the Madam had talked much about for the ensuing season.

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3487

In view of the thoughtfulness of Dr. Butler in writing me, I felt it would be indelicate for me to respond with a flat "No", - hot off the griddle, - just like that. And using the "moral obligations" afforded the opportunity for a time-lapse which I thought would be more considerate in later sending my final negative answer.

Laurel Hill, to my mind, is the last word in the plantations of ante-bellum Mississippi. But Arenbourg is ours to develop as we may and to center our joint aspirations upon for tomorrow.

Laurel Hill is an ante bellum American Acropolis, - to be held in reference and admiration, while Arenbourg is a place for citizens of the world, possessed of mutual enthusiasms, - a place to be lived in and loved.

Never did I give so much as a passing thought to relinquishing the latter for the former, and you may always count on me to do what I can to further the development of our little paradise in the Cane River country, for home is where the heart is, and while Laurel Hill will forever be esteemed, Arenbourg will forever stand as a place of something ever so much deeper and ever-lasting.

In reference to your expression of mild surprise that the vote for the preservation of Yucca should not have been unanimous, the matter is made clearer, perhaps, by quoting the Madam:

"Stephen is the only child I have who is like me, and the further down the line they go, the more Henry they become."

Anything the Madam ever did by way of conserving things was never questioned by her children. It was sufficient that she wanted to express herself in such a manner. But as for being interested in, or even comprehending, few, if any of them were capable. Possessed of the Midas touch, it is money exclusively that matters, so naturally, now that the Madam is gone, any expenditure to further preserve historic buildings seems bizarre indeed if not wasteful. At the moment Dan is building himself a new home in town and says he wants only contemporary furniture in it. The less operating expenses on the plantation, the more the individual dividends will be, and so it is perfectly logical that one should begrudge a penny spent on an old meaningless building in the country when a sixth of the money thus spent might further the feathering of the modern nest. From your point of view and mine, such an attitude is grossly lacking in proportion and a real sense of values. But those of us who find some meaning in monuments of the past are definitely in the minority, and I am sure we both know people who, if offered a Park Avenue apartment or Jumel Mansion as a permanent home, would unhesitatingly select the Park Avenue soap box, and they would be perfectly right, since the historic and artistic associations of the one would mean nothing more to them than the absence of those same things from the other. Democracy is really wonderful, and I continue to marvel that somehow such different minds make a go of it....

3488

Sunday, March 13th, 1949.

Memorandum:

How thoughtful of you to send the air mail, advising me of the safe arrival of the February 28th Memo. It reached me in Saturday's post, but as I did not read it until after the departure of the out-going mail, I'm afraid you found my Friday note repetitious. Every few months a sack of mail for Melville, Louisiana, - somewhere down New Roads way, is delivered to Melrose. I suppose something of the same thing happened to the out-going February 28th mail, for Manhattan. Perhaps it got side tracked at Manhattan Transfer or some such. But the main thing is that eventually it reached your true hand, and I am grateful to you for letting me know so promptly.

Saturday was cloudy and humid. It turned much warmer during the night and about 3 o'clock this morning there was a delicious shower. By 7 o'clock a fog amounting almost to a pin point of rain settled over the countryside, and so I just had to get a thorough dampening to discover how things were perking at Arenbourg.

A half dozen milk and wine lilies were enough to freight the air with their heady perfume, sluggish in the fog and damp. During the night, the Chinese honey suckle had clothed all its branches with fresh tender green leaves. The butterfly lilies I had planted around it a week or so ago had raised their first leaf an inch or so out of the ground. But what really delighted me most, - and it is astonishing how much pleasure something of such slight importance can give, - I discovered that one of the white wisterias, planted but a few weeks back, had brought forth a blossom, like a bunch of milk white grapes. Not all the individual flowers had opened as yet, and so I snipped off the whole business, thus allowing the strength the plant might expend in developing it, go back into the soil to plant itself. Come to think of it, I guess it wasn't the flower itself that filled me with so much pleasure, but rather the assurance which the presence of the flower offered, - for now we know for certain that at least one of the plants is going to be capable of festooning itself in white in many a Spring in years ahead.

I laugh at myself, possibly appreciating the better how mainas possess people, such as a miser for his gold, for here I find myself consumed with impatience, avid with curiosity to welcome a new dawn so I may make another round to see what the intervening 24 hours of humidity and high thermometer readings have brought forth at Arenbourg. I looked more or less imposing when the slatted bedstead was a tool to kick the foundations out from under it.

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3489

Too many visitors today made reading unthinkable, but I did explore a few pages from a book coming to hand in yesterday's post, - for Saturday night seems to be a pretty good night for such business. The book is Dr. Flanders Dunbar's Mind and Body, with a sub-title of something like "Psycho-Somatic Medicine, - but I don't know how to spell Somatic. It is a Random House publication of 1947, and obviously designed for the layman. Some of its contents sound rather interesting, sections having to do with emotional contagion and the like. Mob hysteria doesn't seem especially new as an idea, since it appears to have existed since history was recorded, but somehow I had never realized before that all human beings, and all ages, from the cradle to old age, may be infected singly with an emotional attack by an individual who may be as ignorant as its victim that he is spreading said emotional contagion.

Immediately set my mind to inquiring if I could recognize any one from whom I felt such an illness might come, - emotional, and in a twinkling I could think of several. It set me to pondering as to why and how it is that certain people leave such a wave of happiness when moving beyond their sphere of radiation, - that the happiness comes into being automatically when one is assured the emotional contagionist is definitely out of sight and out of mind. I shall be interested to see what Dr. Dunbar has to offer, - if anything, - for a solution of such a problem personality. Obviously, as we have all experienced, it sometimes happens that such a person may be a king pin in an organization in which by his mere presence, he makes many people unhappy, probably often without being conscious of it. Should all the personalities in the organization who are subject to the contagion this particular one spreads withdraw from the organization, - often, undoubtedly, a move that would entail considerable hardship. Or would Dr. Dunbar recommend that the victims whip up their mental powers sufficiently to disregard the cause of their unhappiness. I shall be interested to learn what he has to say on such points.

He says that according to statistics of industrial organizations and from the military files, it would appear that 80 per cent of the population would benefit from the services of a real psychiatrist, and, from where I sit, that figure, although seemingly high at first thought, may quite well be altogether correct.

I believe Dr. Dunbar is a member of the Presbyterian Hospital of New York, or some other large institution, but some of his lines and phrases could almost have been born within the covers of Mrs. Day's Science and Health. I suppose that lady got as far as she did with her stuff because she was right in her premise, possible but wrong in her conclusion. It always seemed to me she fell flat on her face by failing to declare that mind was primary but that science, although secondary, was not to be disdained, but put to work by the mind for the help of the body. Off hand, her platform looked more or less imposing when she started beating the drum, but she was a fool to kick the foundations out from under it. Again thanks for your nice letter....

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Monday, March 14th, 1949.
The humidity continues, and although cooler it is still in the 60's, and advantageous for our side. We had a good shower during the morning, too, and I set that down to the positive side also. Every drop means extra storage supply in the sub-soil when the hot dry days of mid summer arrive.

But the rain didn't keep me in doors, for I spent the morning at the dentist's. He slit my upper jaw on both sides and by successive applications of the chisel, chipped off a ridge of bone formed along the jaw itself. Without advising me in advance, as he had arranged with Dr. McCook to appear during my appointment, and they consulted over a somewhat curious formation in the roof of my mouth, - an excess bone growth letting down from above, not unlike a ceiling fixture in the center of the room. There was much pondering as to what, if anything should be done, and finally we all agreed that nothing at all should be done, - and so the gums were sewed up again, and I have nothing to worry about but soup for a week, and another sitting a week hence. I hope George Washington didn't have such a time when Paul Revere fixed up the bridge work of the Father of Our Country for him. Celeste tells me she had a telephone from J. H. Sunday night. He had got himself stuck in a snow storm somewhere in Arizona, and so will probably not appear at Melrose before Wednesday morning. If snow must fall during this mid March, I am so glad it selected Arizona and not Arenbourg.

The New Orleans Public Library sent me Proust's Du Cote de Chez Swann, in French, this morning. It is the final transcription of the proof sheets I had last spring from the American Foundation. And speaking of little Marcel reminds me to thank you, if I haven't already, for having advised me that someone is bringing out the author's letters in an American edition. I suppose these may be some from the collection which La Nouvelle Revue Francaise issued in the late 20's or early 30's, and it set me to thinking how little letters actually reveal of a personality unless they were written to someone, - could there be more than one, - who enjoyed the writer's complete confidence. Those garnered from the files of a variety of correspondents might reveal a variety of facets in the writer's personality, but probably with rare exceptions, would they reflect more than one little surface of the complete jewel. Assuredly those written to Anatole France

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who did the Prefaces for his unimportant "Pastiches et Melanges" or those tossed off to Leon Baudet who was to interpret the author in various sketches, would be of scant value as compared with those penned to Albert at the time he was converting him into Albertine. It is doubtful in my mind if Frau Goethe ever had any sense as to the value of the letters her remarkable husband may have penned her, - and I shouldn't be surprised if she never treasured them. When I first saw Albert, I got the impression that the one interest in his life was leading an orchestra, which was then having some success on the Riviera, and it strikes me it would be extraordinary if any of the letters sent in that direction were ever much appreciated or preserved.

For the most part, letters of real worth can probably be written only to this or that individual whom one really cherishes, so that a collection of letters written by one person to a flock of people would, except in rare instances, be of built little more than passing interest. With this thought in mind, it might be interesting to re-read the letters of the real Marquise de Sevigne to determine if she did ever so much better when penning a line to her daughter or her beloved friend, "me, de la Fayette, as contrasted to those she wrote to others less close to her heart.

And in speaking thus, it occurs to me that I was impressed when Dr. Dunbar remarked that although several physicians may be of equal skill, not all of them could have equal success with a particular patient, for sometimes the personality, - the emotions, etc., of one patient may make one physician positively ill, - and therefore ineffective, while another doctor with a different emotional reaction, but no more brilliantly endowed than his confrere might have the greatest success. I gather that natural antipathy may not even enter into the case wherein the patient makes the doctor ill, but merely a difference of emotional manifestations in the make up of the two individuals who simply can't harmonize, relax or assimilate any attempted contact.

I am wondering if something like this doesn't exist as between certain types of correspondents, for, surely when writing to one we love, the thoughts transmit themselves so readily to paper that both the thoughts expressed and the mechanics of jotting them down seem almost sub-conscious and never labored, whereas to another, our mind congeals before it starts to function at all, and each line becomes so forced, in extreme cases, that it must be apparent to almost anyone, save possibly the one to whom the letter is addressed, that in reality it is no letter at all, but at best, the performance of a duty that is accomplished by main force and awkwardness.

Today is Ezra's birthday and he and Fanny, Fugabou and Clyde Claude, Emmette, Avis came by. We had a little glass of wine together, but my glass was raised merely in token, since I'm sticking to soup....

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Tuesday, March 15th, 1949.

Memorandum:

To hand your most excellent letter of Friday, the 11th. You were perfectly right in advising me as you did regarding the failure of my letter of the 26th to reach you on schedule. I firmly believe in remarking upon such matters promptly, and I always take such an occasion to speculate about the matter to as many a postal official as comes my way. I don't expect them to do anything about it for day-to-day mail, but the mere fact that I let them know I keep abreast of such things may well inspire them to exert particular care in out-going items from this point.

There are so many interesting things in your letter that I know not where to begin in making reference to them. It goes without saying that I am delighted you heard from the Rhine region. I am as one with you in feeling that the contemplated new move of that little household holds nothing short of gloom as to its progress in marital rigors. As in psychology, it appears to be easy to diagnose the case, but once that is done, it seems to be difficult to help the patient.

It was certainly kind of her to say what she did about me, and equally thoughtful of you to give me a direct translation. What a play her existence would make in the hands of some Scandinavian writer for the theatre. I think of her so often, and somehow my mind automatically travels back to the first time I ever heard the story of the Ugly Duckling, a splendid swan trying to grow up among chickens or ducks. Citizen of the World equipped with a vision capable of surveying universal horizons, she seems to be encompassed by barricades set up by members of a family with faulty vision and narrowed perspectives to which, at one time, I suppose, she tried to adjust her own optics with scant satisfaction to them and not much more than a feeling of futility for herself. How many of us have not known some Joan of Arc without banners, some Marie Antoinette without regal trappings. I have sometimes thought the galaxy of those two French ladies may have been made a little easier because they were provided with an immense, if infuriated, audience, whereas it so often happens that their sisters in suffering must experience even greater heart-break because they are seemingly ignored. Never did Oscar Wilde say anything more true than when he remarked that there is only one thing worse than being talked about and that is not being mentioned at all.

Poor Anita, I am bound to return to her again and again.

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And I must thank you for telling me about the Wilwick School of which I had never heard and of the film you saw on Thursday night, centering about it. All these details interest me ever so much and I read each line with avidity.

And how gay that you and Egon should have had such an unexpected encounter, and what a pity the opportunity passed for you to have had a little chat together, for both of you would have found much of common interest to discuss, and particularly within such close range of such an inspiring film. But there will be other films and other coincidences, for Egon is unique in intellect and interests, and when two such people revolve about the same sources as do you both, and within the limits of Manhattan, you are bound to be bumping into each other again sooner or later.

And thanks for giving me additional particulars about the presentation of Salome. I did not know there had been a racket about the premiere in 1907, but I remember the Mary Garden attempt aroused ever so much excitement, - and I guess that must have been in the 1920's.

On the local front, the day was splendid, - blue and gold, and much hoeing of lilies at Arenbourg, with torrents of sweat in spite of a fairly cool breeze. Circumstances prevented me from getting ahead of the sun this morning, but I expect to have a good go at things early-early on the morrow.

With a consistency that is probably exceeded only by some of my own, poor Celeste often feels she must remain at home on Sunday afternoons since Madam Regard isn't too strong and shouldn't be left alone, while almost every week day Celeste is in town at cards or a frolic while Madam Regard remains behind by herself, - which she likes. But I sometimes trouble her hours of quiet by passing by for a brief chat. I was glad I did so this afternoon, for I found her greatly agitated, for she had just learned one of the local priests had struck a boy with his car, and being pretty much wrapped up in the elegy, with two sisters who are nuns, the poor lady really needed someone to talk about the matter. The boy, - white trash, I believe, lives on the cement highway between Montrose and Cypress or Natchez, and is a communicant of St. Augustin's Church at Melrose. The school bus stopped in front of the boy's home to let him out, whereupon the priest, in his car, going at only 45 miles an hour, knocked the child down. The reverend father immediately put the boy's mother with the child in his car and rushed them to the Natchitoches hospital where the boy later died. I am naturally sorry for everyone concerned, but I am at the same time thankful that everyone concerned, and most particularly that the driver of the car was of the superior race, for the presence of color could certainly have muddied the waters considerably.

Well, heavens and earth, already at the end of the page, and I thought we were just getting started. Thanks again for your grand letter. There isn't much to the enclosure, as you will see.

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Wednesday, March 16th, 1949

Memorandum: I find most interesting in your letter the way he discovered the primary recommendation of Mr. Jones.

It has always seemed well, in dealing with people of color, such as we live surrounded by, to maintain rigid control of one's features, so that no matter what unexpected thing is said, one never reveals by facial expression the slightest evidence of surprise or merriment, no matter how unexpected a statement may be made.

For by taking everything as a matter of course, one thereby conserves a measure of confidence which otherwise would evaporate in an instant, once a natural reaction should become apparent when something perfectly incredible suddenly unfolds before one's eyes.

An episode this morning is a good example of how something seemingly ever so simple to the speaker strikes the hearer as both hilarious and unbelievable.

I was in my bath when a tapping came at my chamber door, - early-early. On rising from my "sea-shell" and opening the door, I found myself face to face with Sam Brown, who said:

"I'm sorry to worry you, but please, sir, would you get in touch with Airlines for me and right now ask them to send me two flush colored whores."

It is possible there may have been the vaguest elevation of one eyebrow, but I instantly covered by saying in the most matter of fact fashion:

"My, good morning, Sam. You certainly are early today. Of course I'll help you out right away. Come right in and we'll get the matter taken care of this instant."

And so Sam came in and I seated him along side my desk. Inserting a sheet of paper in my typewriter, I said:

"Now let's see, we're going to write to Airlines. How do you spell it, Sam?"

"A-l-i-n-e-s: Airlines, Chicago."

And so we got the address, and then we went on to the request. I asked him how to spell the stuff he wanted.

The book calls 'em whores, but some folks call 'em 'stocking.' Then of course the whole thing unravelled, - 2 pairs of flesh colored hoes from Alden's.

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The enclosure from Dora is generous in giving such an extended account of the articles in life and particularly the Sam Jones slant on a vast Southern problem.

What I find most interesting in Dora's letter, however, is the way he disproves the primary recommendation of Mr. Jones without realizing he does so. Surely it is easy to move pawns about on a map, 900,000 negroes Northward toward Montana, - if one only disregards the human qualities in the chessmen. But just let Dora move the comparatively slight distance from Louisiana to Oklahoma, - and automatically he expresses his longing for his native heath, its gardens, and although I'm conscious he doesn't list it, his love for the people he left behind. Something tells me about \$99,999 of the Mississippi negroes, suddenly transported to Montana would be likely to manifest the same longing, - save in those cases where they selected their new residence on their own volition and were not lost in some vast mass migration which was purely economic and social in its aspects. A couple of things going in to make up a citizen of the world, I guess, is his ability to find something of fundamental interest to himself almost any place he happens to alight, and another thing, probably of equal importance, that having once taken to the air, he is likely to take a good look at the next projected halting place. If lucky, he eventually finds a place that incorporates a maximum of the geographic, social, cultural, economic ad infinitum that appear to be centered in one region, and there will he probably find contentment, - another word for home.

Something tells me that Mr. Jones' solution has its theoretical merits, even as does surgery, wherein "the operation was a success but the patient died". And speaking of surgery, I got a great kickout of your lines about thinking of the Cane River country when Dr. I. Q.'s assistant declares:

"I have a lady, doctor." And Lo! I had a lady doctor this evening. I was pointing out some trees to be cut in the front garden at Melrose this afternoon when the go-cart stopped at the front gate and Dr. Eleanor came in accompanied by her friend, Miss or Mrs. Tucker, from Carmel, California. We did a brief tour for the West Coast number who was obviously just as interested, say, as your and J.'s friend, "The Chipmunk". And so we passed by Yucca for a little visit and a glass of excellent Vermouth which was brought me as a gift.

There wasn't much news, although I was quite interested in a tussle between the head priest of St. Augustin and Dr. Eleanor concerning the ability or inability of a Catholic mulatto patient and her danger to her life in having another child. The patient has long been in Dr. Eleanor's care and she delivered her last baby and thoroughly acquainted with the case, she realized that the next would prove fatal to the Mother. He accordingly recommended an abortion, - and the fur flew, cleric versus medico, - and science won and the other lives. But the priest insisted on baptizing, what shall I say, - the abortive baby.....

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Thursday, March 17th, 1949.
Memorandum: Uncle d'Or's and St. Patrick's birthday and Madam Roosevelt's wedding anniversary. Naturally I thought frequently of you, - not because of the d'Or Patrick Roosevelt business, - but because I assume Fifth Avenue was cluttered up with phalanxes of Irishmen, making any hope of negotiating the Fifth Avenue parade ground present its usual difficulties for anyone attempting to cross that thoroughfare, save by subway.

The weather was perfect in these parts, so far as the welfare of the growing things at Melrose and Arenbourg go, for it was humid and warm with an overcast sky that scattered little drizzles during much of the morning. My shoes were wet through before 6 this morning and although I changed them twice during the day, they are still damp, and I shall be glad to cast them off shortly and plunge into a hot bath.

Our little pear trees at Arenbourg surprised me by putting forth a few blossoms during the night. I reckon they might have produced fruit on the strength of them, but thinking that early growth was better, I eliminated the blossoms so the youngsters may concentrate exclusively on height and breadth for the balance of the current season.

I had supper with J. H. who says the visit of the editors has been stepped up a day. They will arrive on Monday, the 21st, right after lunch and will spend the balance of the day at Melrose. As their entire trip throughout Louisiana will cover but 4 days, it would seem that Melrose is getting a generous slice of the time, - a half day.

I had a heap of stuff dug up and moved from under the great oak in the front garden where supper will be served on Monday evening if the weather be fair. In the event of rain, the collation will be laid in the big house, of course. I haven't the details regarding the menu, but I believe roast beef, - barbecued, potatoes, salad and beer will be the mainstays.

In spite of a couple of contingents of passing pilgrims and Dr. Knipmayer's visit, I somehow got in a bit of

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spade work at Arenbourg, and I planted some lilies, - splendid bulb and root systems, on the terrace on Uncle d'Or side. I have often heard these lilies discussed and so often have they been given different names that like the Giant's Beard, I have almost forgotten what they really are listed in the catalogues. Their stem is usually from 2 to 3 feet in height and the color of the flower is somewhat blue-purple, with occasionally a hint of red over-shadowing the blue coloring. - Milke and Wine lilies are already planted along the same curve, and I am hoping that the contrasts in shading may be pleasant. If it isn't we can easily remove the new-comers to another site, but it will do them no harm to try out their present situation, as it is in a spot where the soil is the richest I know, and they are bound to grow great, even though they should remain "put" but a single season.

On receipt of her letter, my first thought was that I would send it along to Robina, but on second thought, I am not doing so, since the latter had hoped little Miss Anne might find a story in the man whose history she had recounted in her letter. I might add that to her original letter, Robina had attached a little slip, saying that if I cared to, I might send it along to Georgetown, which, of course, I did promptly. But it is obvious that Madam Titmell's mind was on other matters, and since there is no reference at all to the story in her response, it seems kinder to me to write Robina, telling her that I have received a note of acknowledgement, indicating appreciation of her letter and remarking that a child's book is engrossing her creative efforts at the moment.

It goes without saying that I am glad to learn "A Clouded Star" is being cast into Talking Book records and I shall write and tell her as much, following Monday's visitors for possibly I shall run across some of her friends under the big oak on that day.

Today I sent my annual subscription for Talking Book Topics to the American Foundation, and in so doing, I wanted to remark again how much I have benefited from these recorded reviews during the past year. It was because of your generosity and thoughtfulness that my original subscription came to hand, and the year has been the happier because of the pleasure these have afforded me, thanks to you.....

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Friday, March 18th, 1949.

Memorandum: Marvelous sunshine all day, but a cold mass of air pushed down this way last night so that today's thermometer readings never did get out of the 50's, and unless the Weather Man is all wrong, it will go down to freezing tonight. I guess it won't hurt anything but it will tend to slow things up a bit.

Along about ten o'clock this morning, J. A. appeared at my door with 15 or 20 men, asking to see "the family portraits", as he usually refers to the fine collection of mulatto oils at Yucca. He presented the men individually and I liked them. They are wealthy lumber people from Waco and environs, spending time fishing at Black Lake which is off in the general direction of Briarwood.

Several of them were friends of the Baldwins, and so it was pleasant to have news from that quarter, although we discovered the mutual acquaintance only by chance. Three of the men said they would call up the Baldwins on their return to Waco to talk over old times at Melrose.

The enclosure from Miss Nellie is very interesting, I think both for what it touches on and what it skips. I gather, since it wasn't mentioned, that the Beaumont letter of 1848 is gone forever, but while interesting, it wasn't too vital.

It is a little depressing that "atchez has changed so terrifically, but that was inevitable, I guess. I gather that Madam Moore must be on the Natchez Democrat, which of course is news. As for "my friend," Nola "ance, she will have to take care of herself, and obviously she doesn't need any help from me. I must say it's remarkable that such a bag, - and numb-skull to boot, should be getting a job as Editor. Like Democracy, so business ventures offer opportunity to all sorts of people, so many of whom unexpectedly rise quite unexpectedly, and in other situation, although I witness it or them, I do comprehend.

I am wondering if the New York papers are carrying accounts of the remarkable set of coincidences occurring at the broadcast of festivities at the opening of The Shamrock Hotel in Houston last night. I chanced to be tuned in when it has been said that it was always with you as always.....

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the program was supposed to go on the air, but as I heard nothing moment arily, I assumed the station had faded, and so went over to Columbia, and so missed the curses of the engineers that crackled on the air waves, not to mention the more bawdy things that issued forth when everyone in the net work, except those before the microphones, realized that service had been restored. Referring to the incident, local stations on the Columbia system this morning gave a terrific roasting to "a certain unnamed system, not Columbia", and it was stated that this particular "other net work" would go on the air tonight to make apology for last night's strange doings which seems to be the first time anything so extraordinary has transpired since the famous Orsen Wells program detailing a landing of the men from Mars a decade or more ago.

Surely the youthful building of the Shamrock is a lucky man, for not only has everything he has ever touched turned to gold, but even when publicity turns into something notorious, the final consequence will be that, as probably rightly, the onus will be placed properly at the door of the National Broadcast Company, and everybody across the nation who might never have heard of the Shamrock, even as you and I, will be familiar with the name of this latest of super-elegant hosteleries.

Celeste and Madam Regard left for New Iberia this afternoon to spend the week end with Betty Regard Courager. Betty had written to ask if she might have something from the Melrose gardens to raise in her own Memory Garden, suggesting she would welcome some roots of the butterfly lily of which she knew I was particularly fond. In doing up the bundle for her, I enclosed a note, giving an account of the family history of the things sent. For the historically-minded who have a sentimental interest in such matters, the value of such plants may be enhanced by such particulars. I think, for example, the butterfly lilies came from the gardens of Col. Fugh's Bayou LaFourche plantation, - Woodlawn, brought to Melrose by the Madam where they graced the front garden for years when later I moved some of them to Yucca to laden the front gallery with their perfume. A generous assortment of Giant White Iris roots came from two gardens in Mississippi, some from the garden of old Darby of Immigrant's Guide fame in the Pine Ridge section, and some from Dr. Affleck's old garden near Washington, Miss. I brought them to Melrose in 1941, and now, heading out for South Louisiana, I suppose some of them will eventually be given to somebody or other in Hatcher, thus making the circle of their jaunt complete. I think there is a seed for a book, perhaps a geography or horticultural study in the business, designed perhaps for a child. But I'm speculating to the end of the page and so must halt. It has been nice chatting with you as always....

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2001. 1131 1011. 1011. 1011.

Memorandum: A pleasant, quiet week end, with the weather warming and apparently not much damage done by Friday night's frost.

I broke both my custom and my own rules of behavior by gardening at Arenbourg before sun up this Sabbath. Late last evening I received some crinums which arrived too late to be planted. On Monday I shall have to head out early for another go-round with the dentist, and what with the conclave for the balance of the day, I figured I would have little opportunity to do any digging, and thus I found an excellent excuse, to save the lives of the crinums, by following the old adage, "the better the day, the better the deed".

The items were in excellent condition, some of them small to the size of a silver dollar, and one or two much larger, perhaps the size of a 500 watt electric light bulb. I believe they are a salmon pink in color and will probably do very well in the space to the North of the Metoyer house, bordering on the circle separating Units No. 2 and 3.

Intuition impelled me to make another round just after dinner, when I found some fine Illorenz chickens scratching like mad in the newly turned earth. I think they did the bulbs no harm, however, and to discourage further in-roads during my absence, I covered the spot with wire netting which will make scratching more of a problem.

In view of its power to attract pilgrims from every which way, I thought Saturday was seen a heap of to and fro Texans passing this way, but fortunately, I was wrong. A couple of people from Hatcher passed this way and some youth from Alexandria ran by to say Howdy, but that represented the sum and substance of visitors, and I was pleased, for I had a dozen odds and ends to attend to, and sight-seers cluttering up the place are no help at such times.

Little King dropped by to see me this afternoon. Today he and his twin brother are 20. I have known them since they were 10 or 11, and in that span, one of them has been with the Army in Japan and both of them are married. One quick glance backward, and I find my beard is much longer and grayer than I had realized.

According to Little King, Saturday night was a success at the Melrose social club, hard by Arenbourg, for during the

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course of the evening only one pistol was fired a few times and one one person was nicked a bit. That the gathering might not be chalked up a total loss, however, little Sam took a pass at August while Levy Williams gave Sam Brown a good clout. All in all, however, everything was pretty tame.

And the mention of Sam Brown's name reminds me that I asked him the other day about his new hound dog. He said it was one that some fisherman or hunter must have left when passing this way. Several negroes, he said, had told him the dog wouldn't stay with him but would eventually find its way back to its master, but Sam assured me he knew better. In case you are ever presented with such a problem, here is the unfailing way to make it impossible for the dog ever to leave you. Just snip three hairs from the back of the dog's neck and three from the end of his tail. Wrap these in an old rag and bury the same under your front steps, and the dog can't possibly tear himself away from you. Now it may be, of course, that like me, you might experience some difficulty in burying six dog hairs under your front steps, but don't despair, for I reckon that just so long as the number is six and they are removed from the proper part of the dog's anatomy, it really doesn't matter so much where you bury them. But seriously, isn't it remarkable that this kind of Voo-doo belief still persists, and, should this page survive a century, someone along about 2049 will probably be asking the same question, after reading this.

From the enclosure, it appears I did well to restrain my impulse to send Robina Anne Parrish's letter. I guess it is obvious, after a moment's thought, why Robina offered to quote from little Miss Anne's letter to her rather than to send it for me to read. In responding to Miss Parrish's letter, if Robina should feel impelled to do a brief biographical sketch of me, it ought to make interesting reading, Robina is so kindly disposed but so far from comprehending my interest and enthusiasms.

And so Hildegard is to be Fred Allen's guest next Sunday night, and do I understand that Hildegard is an American from Minnesota, or some such place. Well, anyway, the announcement of the lady's name on tonight's program reminds me that I intended to throw in a phrase the other night when speaking of two French ladies, Joan of Arc and Marie Antoinette. The thought was that if Hitler had have been smart, he wouldn't have had too much difficulty in getting Dr. Goebels to prove that both these Gallic heroines might somehow get under the rope as Germanic, what with Lorraine and Austria to be considered.

Three hairs from the back of a dog's neck and three more from his tail, - and so the world spins.....

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March 21st, (Monday), 1949.

Memorandum;

As the date line indicates, I must be sleepy, having forgotten to begin with the day of the week until indicating the day of the month.

Well, the crowd has come and gone, and withal happy, I guess, for everything seemed to go off very nicely.

Surely weather makes a profound impression on anyone viewing a place for the first time, and from dawn this morning until dark, we had lots of weather.

Not since we buried the Madam on November 18th has it poured so hard as it did all morning. Even as then, the gardens were afloat, and the prospects for aquatic sight-seeing seemed guaranteed. But a couple of hours before the guests arrived, the rains suddenly ceased and a brilliant sun came forth, and for the balance of the day the sky has been cloudless. The earth, already moist from recent rains, quickly soaked up the pools and puddles while the tender green of the new foliage shimmered in the sun as it seldom does but once or twice in Spring.

I banked my fireplaces with masses of grandiflora magnolia branches, fraught with a few sprays of Milk and Wine lilies peeped through. I used bouquets of white German iris to grace my desk and the occasional tables, so that the place looked fairly gay.

I left J. H. and Celeste to receive the people on their arrival, while I remained at Yucca.

Within half an hour from their arrival at "elrose, the whole concourse, most of them bearing cocktails in hand, passed this way. They appeared more interested in the house and its pictures and furniture than the usual run of pilgrims and after I had welcomed them with a little speech in which sufficient digression was made to give them some conception of what the place was all about, ever so many of them sought further particulars on one point or another.

A little later, J. H. asked me if I would show a select few his "other's" scrapbook collection. I think he always prefers to have me do so since he knows I will point out the virtues of his "other" and the value of this segment of her contribution to posterity which probably he might feel hesitant about doing.

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There were many flash light pictures taken of us during this phase of the gathering, and if some of these come to hand, I shall send them along.

I wanted to wander about the gardens with some of the guests, but a constant stream of inquiries from various people who had waited to get my ear made it impossible to get away from the big house.

The supper was served from buffets in the summer and winter dining rooms and guests, bearing food and drink, scattered in groups about the house and gardens, one the galleries and inside both Melrose and Yucca. I was late in getting around to nourishment since several newspaper people with their photographers asked me to let them get some shots of me in front of the big house, - publishers from Washington, Cincinnati, Boston and New Orleans, I believe. I still can't figure out why they wanted to get the shots of me, unless they mistook me for a descendant of the mulattoes. If the pictures are to be used for publicity, J. E. or some of the Henrys should have been the one to get "struck", and accordingly it is to be summed that these doings were for the writers private record of their visit. In all pictures, they asked me to be holding a book, so perhaps it will turn out that they will set me down as the only living cock-eyed archivist or some such outlandish business.

At eventually I called a halt, for while it may have been fun for the writers and photographers, it wasn't getting me anywhere with the food and guest departments which was my primary interest at the moment.

I found a chair waiting for me on the gallery between a charming lady from Boston, - The Transcript, I believe, and a Washington newspaper man who had much of interest to tell me about Williamsburgh, and it was pleasant as we chatted to hear the voices of the darkies singing from off in the kitchen, - church hymns such as "Swing low, Sweet Chariot", and so on, their voices pleasantly soft and appealing in the buzz of conversation from guests scattered further away in the gardens and on the upper galleries.

The sun was down, of course, before the guests left. A banker from Baton Rouge came back to ask me if he might bring his wife to see - elorse on a Sunday in April, and what delighted me more, one of the drivers sought me out to explain that he was really nobody in either the newspaper or political world but that he had really loved seeing the place and that he would be so happy if his wife might see it too, for she is so interested in old Southern homes. I made him understand that such people are really the ones who are most welcome at - elorse, and he disappeared into the dusk, happy as a clam that he had an invitation to return within two weeks with his wife. So the day closed, with everything having gone nicely, and now, because I'm tired, I am about fall into a bath and thence to bed.....

3504

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Tuesday, March 22nd, 1949. I
Memorandum: A beautiful day, not only because God is so generous with blue sky and warm soft breezes, but also because Manhattan came forth so generously with elegant messages. I saw
And may I congratulate you on the Phillis Wheatly business, for there appears to be a real find, and one to whom you are introducing me for the first time. What with her geographical situation and her bent in the field of poetry, she really should be the one to write the "Poor Child" in my sepia, can't you? Perhaps you had better make the suggestion this time, and I think you would get further with your recommendation that Robina did with hers.

And until you mentioned it, I had heard nothing about Mrs. Roosevelt's book on life and times in the White House. If the volume is to run serially prior to publication, and the magazine begins printing in June, I imagine the volume complete may be expected along about November, for I believe it is customary for publication date of the book to be set prior to the final appearance of the monthly installments, - that is their termination. I know perfectly well you will never be able to resist beginning the articles when they start in June, and I have sometimes undertaken reading things in serial form, but was once greatly disappointed when years later I discovered, on reading the volume in book form, that considerable abridgement had been perpetrated when the work was issued in the magazine articles. I hope they don't do a like business with Mrs. R.'s book, for every word will be of interest to us.

And neither had I heard of Mrs. Nesbitt's volume. If memory serves, she was housekeeper for the official family, both at Albany and in Washington, and if so, there ought to be many an interesting domestic detail of genuine interest.

I'm so glad you ran across so many "treasures" in 4th Avenue. Anita will be delighted with her volumes, and Henry Adams is going to offer much to you, too, just as he will for me, for by chance I asked New Orleans only yesterday to send me his Education which I hadn't read in two or three years, and somehow your telepathy must have inspired me with the wish to read it again. Undoubtedly we shall be taking Henry apart and putting him together again quite often within the near future. His intellect was so remarkable and his patronage of the Arts so generous, and yet a withal, some of his theories seem so crack-pot, - such as his idea that you might make a science out of History, and his tendency, - because of an inferiority complex, I imagine, - to be rather pert with some people, - and his unforgivable failure to acknowledge Oscar Wilde's nod in Paris in the trying days when Mr. Wilde was there in exile. It will be fun re-reading the book.

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I don't know why I was surprised this morning when I heard the major Texas and Louisiana net works broadcast the doings of the visiting Editors, covering yesterday's activities. Before covering that subject, they reported more extensive storm destruction in the morning than I had suspected. I believe the rain was reported at 3 inches, and a 60 mile wind between Melrose and Alexandria carried off many high power lines and blew down buildings at a great rate, including a school for colored children where several students and a couple of teachers were injured, and in a neighboring home a negro baby was killed when the house was blown down. I guess we were fortunate in felling none of this, and in having the afternoon turn out so delightfully sunny.

Both Columbia and the National net works spoke of the revisiting editors being on a tour of Natchitoches, "the oldest city in Louisiana" during the morning, and of being entertained in the afternoon at Melrose, "the largest pecan plantation in the world" - a piece of information I handed along to J. H., which made him laugh.

Our poor guests, it seems, after leaving the Cane River country, were hustled on to Alexandria, where they had to attend a late dinner, and today their schedule carries them to Lafayette, New Iberia and Iberville on to Avery Island, reminding me of the old remark by somebody or other about "seeing St. Peter's in 20 minutes and Rome in half an hour".

According to local estimates, between 60 and 100 people attend the Melrose party, more than half of whom were probably political and economic leaders from various sections of the State. Perhaps the local papers will carry some account of the doings, and if so, I shall tip in your behalf. At supper tonight, J. H., in speaking of yesterday's party, remarked:

"The niggers were going along good with their spiritual singing until Mayor Keys of Natchitoches and some of the other white folks got to messing around and trying to get them to sing bogeywokey. It's bad enough for town folks who don't know town niggers, always trying to do them over, but when they take on the plantation nigger, brother, they're blowed up right then and there."

I want to say thanks again to you for having been so kind as to send me the direct quotation from the Times regarding Mrs. R.'s forthcoming volume. Her observations regarding her own knowledge of her husband are so profound, yet so simply couched, that, as in some of her other writing, its profundity seems to elude some people, even as a fable to an untutored child, might seem like a mere tale until such an age does he reach that he can comprehend the full import of the moral lesson involved.

What a grand day, thanks to you and God, and I shall lay me down a little earlier tonight, and sleep the more contentedly, thanks to each of you....

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Wednesday, March 23rd, 1949.
Memorandum:

I reckon I might begin to let Spring take care of itself, and merely record the phenomenon of a return of Winter, should that improbably event take place.

But the air is so mellow and the joy of freshly unfolded leaves so striking that every days weather seems worth talking about even though it ceases to be news.

The number of passers-by seems to have picked up a little, affording me no particular pleasure, what with my wish to stick to the end of my hoe. But today's batch were pleasant and at least one out of every four was apparently interested in what he had to see, which is a pretty fair average for professional road-runners.

The last group appeared while Mrs. Rand and I were wandering about the garden, observing the latest wrinkles in primavera while catching up on our conversation. I greeted the unexpected visitors and recommended that they just circulate about the place for a while, thus killing two birds with one stone, for intelligent people often like to give the place a once over by themselves, and such an opportunity for them afforded the same chance to Mrs. Rand and me. She had no particular news although she did report several interesting side lights on the Monday morning storm in the Alexandria area, trees blowing down, all electric wires cut and so on, but everyone came through alright even though the gardens in that area suffered considerably.

She is going to find us some dwarf gardenias for Arenbourg which she said she thought might be sent along at next week when our recent order for grandiflora from Ed Rand is supposed to be delivered. Perhaps with pressure from the maternal and fraternal sides pushing, Ed may come through this year.

I told her about the trailing gardenias, vines, which flourish with such abandon at St. Francisville on the old plantation where Mr. Audubon taught the beautiful Miss Percy to dance and paint. She was delighted to know about such a plant, for somehow it had escaped both her and the doctor. I remember how delightful these vine gardenias were, massing along the fences and over the smaller bushes in the old neglected garden when

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early one Spring morning the Madam and I dropped in to have a chat with Miss Lucy Mathews. Of course we had to bring some home, and those I set out at Yucca did pretty well. Last year I transferred them to Arenbourg but they suffered from the unique cold and ice, but did not survive the intense heat that followed when last summer arrived. I shall prepare another place for them to be housed this year at Arenbourg, and I believe this time they will make a go of it.

I had a grand time at Arenbourg this morning, concentrating mostly on weed cutting about the nandinas and crepe myrtles. In the last two or three days, many of the more vigorous things, flowers and weeds alike, have shot up 6 or 8 inches, and it's a vast source of satisfaction to slaughtered the one for the benefit of the other.

Just in order to keep the record straight, I must confess that I had no idea that Columbia could have been perfectly right the other morning when reference was made to the visit of the editors to "the largest pecan plantation in the world". But such seems to have been the case. I was curious to know where the largest one was, assuming, of course, as in everything else, it must be so where in Texas or possibly an extensive one in Texas or Concordia Parish. But after checking the matter over, J. A. came to the conclusion that "elrose" appears to carry off the palm, if there be any palms in relation to mere numbers of trees and acres. I believe, like the cotton planted here, so it is with the pecanes, - the fields are so distributed that one seldom sees more than a limited quantity at a time, and because of that, the impression given is one of limited extent.

J. A. says that other pecan plantations have undertaken bare pecanes growing on an extensive scale, but seem to have felt that once the tree was planted, it would automatically take care of itself, - which pecanes don't seem to do, and that by neglect, the other major plantings seem to have dwindled in productivity during the years while "elrose" has steadily grown, both in trees set out and in its annual production.

I shall not get around to do much reading for the next few days but I have a couple of things I want to dip into when I can. One book by Appleby or some such name, is called "Big Democracy", and the first pages sound interesting, - written by a man sympathetically presenting points he has viewed in Washington of the contributions made by Federal agencies to promoting the public's "life and pursuit of happiness", and Richard Wright's "Black Boy" came recently, too, and I am bound to dip into that, even though it doesn't offer a happy picture.

But I must fold herewith. A little package went forward today....

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Thursday, March 24th, 1949.

Cloudy, warm and occasional drizzles. I think the forecast for tomorrow is clearing skies in the afternoon, although a hundred mile wide belt of thunder storms moving Eastward from Texas tonight makes anything over the radio sketchy and uncertain. Fortunately the Reading Machine never reacts in sympathy to other disturbances.

I got in a few good licks at Arenbourg this morning before Knipmayer time, but as I was concentrating on getting the roots of Johnson Grass out of the ground so the drizzle could ruin them, I didn't have much satisfaction in actual creative labor. I devoted most of the afternoon to planting the triangle where the garage used to stand at the juncture of the Bermuda and Montrose Roads. It was up-hill business, what with concrete not to be whacked up before anything like a sub-surface could be reached, and that seemed to be hardpan. As the highway itself cuts pretty close to the foundations of the old garage, there isn't much choice as to where a ything can be set, and whatever was planted today will probably die. I put a watermelon red crepe myrtle at each point, flanking each of them with two white ones, and interspersed them with privet hedge, so there will be color in Winter as well as summer. I wanted to put stakes beside each item planted by way of protection, but it was hard enough blasting holes for the plants. Another factor that deflates enthusiasm is the fact that the crepe myrtles are already in leaf and will probably not live a week. After all, they should be planted in November when the sap is down and not in March when it is already in full circulation. But the highway department wouldn't indicate just where the actual road line would run until today, - and so it was useless to do anything in advance of their edict.

Not contented to let the two men who were helping me dig the holes, I had to mess around myself, and ended up by cutting my middle finger on a broken bottle hidden just beneath the concrete. It isn't sore, but I incline to limp a little as I fly up and down this keyboard. At supper J. A. said that the radio announced the breaking of the levee opposite Baton Rouge today. I think the Mississippi is not very high at the moment, and probably no great stretch of it will be effected, although I have heard no details. The enclosure, covering little Miss Alberta's 823 Royal house

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seems to indicate the writer of the article expresses himself curiously or perhaps isn't up on his Myra Clark Gaines business. Or could I be wrong and is it possible to use such a phrase as "before the time Myra Clark Gaines came into Daniel Clark's life. I don't recall such an expression being used about one's offspring, and certainly old Daniel, actually, doesn't seem to have been much effected either way by the birth of his supposed daughter. Well, anyway, little Miss Alberta has a nice clean front room and quite an elegant garden, and I am glad on both counts for her.

Strangely enough, Dr. Knipmeyer, who always knows everything going on in the Parish, did not even know visiting editors had been in town or out here. I had two or three telephone calls from people in town today, and each of them indicated they had not received invitations.

What really happened was that J. H. assumed local people would be invited by the Chamber of Commerce which entertained the guests at luncheon before coming out here, while the Chamber of Commerce, it is supposed, thought J. H. was issuing separate invitations, and so a couple of the local newspaper editors failed to be bidden and a number of prominent citizens, - the Peyton Cummings, the R. B. Williams and so on. But while it would have been nice to have had them, there were certainly enough here without them, and in the final analysis, spelled curiously enough, the afternoon was really intended for the visiting editors and not the local gentry.

Just as I was preparing to fold up my beard last night and do a little serious radio listening, the Dark Duke dropped in to see me. I never tire hearing his memories of war experiences, - and prison, - in Africa, Italy, France and Belgium. He remained until after midnight, and so I did not even turn on my radio when finally folding up.

He asked me to try a Camel from a pack he had just bought to see if I found the taste of the smoke strange. Obviously the package was stale. I liked the way her expressed it.

"The smoke taste like the table where you have to eat at somebody's house where the lady don't keep the boards scrubbed clean after every meal."

I like those little jogs ever once in a while. After all most of us seem to have dined from tables covered with a cloth or fashioned of some plastic so that we are want to forget, until thus reminded, that many a family still dines off the barren planks of a wooden table. A party is scheduled for the school at Little River tonight, but from the constant flashing of lightening to the Northwest, with a deluge likely at any moment, something tells me it will be postponed. As for myself, I am determined to get caught up a bit on my correspondence, including a couple of letters to Mesdames Drake and Martin of Natchez, assuming they are attending the Foreign Language Conference at the Natchitoches college next week Friday and Saturday.....

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3510

Friday, March 25th, 1949.

Memorandum: I am assuming and hoping this message may not be so long on its journey as was that of February 28th. I am praying it may reach you on your natal day. I am praying it may reach you on your natal day.

Just as on New Year's Day, I like to take time out for a little while to glance backward over the past twelfth month to consider the events transpiring in that period, so it has become my habit, as of March 30th, to take time out, too, in order that I may count all the blessings that have unfolded to make a life happier and more worthwhile. I shall cease to ponder on the marvels of happiness, and how the window gazing on a whole Paradise, can be opened by a single personality.

Naturally every March 30th should be a day for your own particular celebration, but sometimes I wonder if you can ever imagine how much that same day means to others, and with what affection and gratitude their hearts are filled on that particular day just because you set a seal of happiness for others just by being. Wednesday, of course, will, like all week days, be ever so busy for you in its concern with the usual routine. But I hope there will be little glimmers of sunlight of especially happy moments breaking through ever so often from dawn 'til dusk, and I know many a soul, with whom you will have personal contact will make you feel the happier because they are rejoicing with you. And sometimes during the day, I am hoping, too, that little messages sent by telepathy will set up a special vibration for those who are far away in miles only, and if but a fraction of those feelings permeate the heart, then your own special day will be ever so happy because you are sharing with us the happiness that you generate so lavishly to others throughout the entire year. Last night I so much wished I might have passed along a couple of extra sleeping hours, I took for myself but really didn't need. The incessant cannonading of the elements discouraged radio reception, and my "Big Democracy" seemed dull to the point of having been penned by a Sandman. And so I gave moth machines a rest, too, and folded up early. I awoke sometime during the night to hear hail stones bouncing around in my boudoir

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but I didn't bother to turn on the light to inquire what the hour might be, and if the hail stones were having fun sliding down into my fireplace, that was alright with me.

It has continued cloudy all day, - and warm, with several good showers during the day and a promise for the same program for tomorrow. I'm liking every drop that comes down, and aside for being good for Arenbourg, where the elephant traps are brim full, there is also the pay-off in the discouragement prospective pilgrims feel in not journeying this far afield.

I guess the enclosures are of no interest but I send them along regardless. Payne told me today that he had been in Baton Rouge a day or two ago, and that The General was planning to come to "elrose for Easter but that Pat wasn't going to be able to make it. At supper tonight, Dan told me that the Wenks are planning to spend the week end here along about the 3rd of April. That ought to be a fairly big doings, and especially should the Joe Henrys arrive unannounced, blow in, for "everything goes black" whenever Joe and Sister get within 50 miles of each other.

This afternoon several of the "atchitoches gentry, not present on Monday, had telephoned asking if they might come out for a little visit. With Celeste and Madam Regard in Ourch these afternoons and J. H. in Alexandria today, I should have had ample opportunity to taunt them with what they missed, but the rains came, and the guests did not, - and so that will be something for another day. I needed some fresh flowers for Yucca, and so I journeyed in a drizzle up to Arenbourg to see what was what, and Milk and Wine lilies were it. I had brought down a fine bouquet for Monday, but thanks to the opulence of the Arenbourg lilies, plus the favorable growing season, there was another ample supply ready for me today. I am a little puzzled as to why the Arenbourg lilies of this variety are already so well advanced while the ones at Melrose haven't so much as put up the suggestion of a bud. It can't be the difference in soil, for at Arenbourg they are in full flower in both rich and in poor places. It is possible the greater absence of shade may turn the trick at Arenbourg, although the heavier growth of trees and bushes at Melrose would seem to have afforded the latter greater protection from whatever in-roads the freeze made on things along about the last day of January. But however the cause, I am naturally tickled that our side is out ahead. How often between now and Wednesday, I shall be thinking of your and "holding the thought" that your day may be ever so happy. But regardless of the weather on the 30th, - sun or rain, warm or chill, may your day be a little the more cheery because of the reflected happiness bouncing back to you from all you have turned on me....

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Sunday, March 27th, 1949. To the
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Memorandum:

Since my Friday night letter, the weather has changed not at all. Except for an occasional crash, the thunder has continued to roll remotely and pleasantly. Throughout the humidity has remained at 100, with drizzles alternating with downpours, and withal the temperature pleasantly around 70. I think I have never seen light ning persist at split second intervals over such a prolonged space of time, - almost theatrical at the half-light periods of dawn and dusk, but a little trying after dark, the semi-lunes at Arenbourg are too obviously filled to entrap any elephants and the public roads are too muddy to entice any pilgrims. In fine the whole thing delights me endlessly, and I am also regretful to hear the Weather Man declare that tomorrow might be but partly cloudy.

Such soupy weather usually isn't the best for planting but in the case of crinums, nothing could be better, and by sheer luck I secured a number of additional bulbs on Saturday. I coaxed them into the ground when once for a few minutes, the rains slackened, and today they appear to be as full of vitality as though they had never known any other spot as home. Saturday's planting included some white ones and some scarlet, which ought to contrast handsomely with the salmon pink ones planted a week or so ago. They are favorably placed, so far as sunshine and shade go, and I have no doubt they will do very well.

When posting a letter to Mr. Bachelier yesterday, I learned quite by chance that he has been in the hospital in Matchitoches for more than a week. It seems curious I didn't learn of it before. According to third hand report, he needs to be built up, which may be all there is to it, - for the negroes have long had it that he must be a spirit, since he never eats more than a biscuit and a glass of warm milk. I have always wondered how he maintained such physical vitality and strength on such a meager diet, and now it would appear he has been eating into his reserves which, I suppose, have become exhausted. I suppose he is about the Madam's age, and at 75 the building up process may be an uphill business. I shall get some first hand information shortly as to his present status, - from his physician, - but I almost hesitate to bother Dr. Eleanor, for Celeste tells me that Dr. Eleanor is beginning to show unmistakable signs of laboring under an extreme nerve tension. Madam Regard spent Thursday in the hospital taking

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a variety of tests, and in the afternoon, the lady doctor was found flattened out on the floor in the corridor where she had fallen. Isn't it a pity that nothing can be contrived to make her slow down before she cracks up completely.

Naturally I can't make up my mind if I should contact her to inquire about Mr. Bachelier, or call on Mr. Bachelier to find out about his physician. I mean, that's what I call a business.....

Aside from the visits of some of my negro friends, I haven't seen many people over the week end. As of Dec-dee, the Dark Duke, Attrice and a few others from Little River dropped in Saturday and this morning Little-fing passed by to ask me if I wouldn't like to go with him to the spillway to see some extraordinary fishing. Soads of popular types of fish currently clutter up the bed of the river where the spillway begins, - buffalo and red snappers, with average length of two and a half feet and weighing from 5 to 10 pounds. No bait is used in hauling them out, and no pole. A three-pronged fish hook of ordinary size is attached to a line and attached to a sinker. The line is thrown in and on sinking to the bottom, the line is quickly dragged out, frequently hooking a fine fish at any old place in his anatomy, but back, side, tail or where ever. I declare I never saw such kind of angling, and the remarkable part of it is that seldom does the fish seem to get away.

In yesterday's post came a book I did not know about but which on sampling, I discovered I liked ever so much. It was published along about 1928, and is by Erwin Edmond, Professor of Philosophy, whom I used to see occasionally in New York and in strange out of the way places in Europe, although I never knew him well. It's a memoir type and makes easy reading. In one chapter he mentions a curious type of youth whom he liked while the latter was a brief student at Columbia. I wish he had told more about the young man, for I think I once knew him and his family, all of whom were delightful but as unpredictable and extraordinary as could be imagined. The name was O'Coner, and I believe they hailed originally from Ireland. Obviously wealthy, the father permitted the several boys to express themselves just as they pleased. I recall one had a studio in Greenwich Village, where he did some very interesting sculpturing for a while, and I remember how surprised I was one night when quite indifferent to what was going on, I accompanied a friend to the Sports-alais in Paris, only to discover that one of the brothers was the star of the evening in the boxing ring. Dr. Edmond doesn't mention either of these two latter youths, but I have a feeling they are the same "Sanger Circus" family I had once known but had so long since forgotten. The name of the book by the way is "A Philosopher's Holiday" and is good sandwich spread between somewhat factual chapters of "Big Democracy".

The enclosures speak for themselves. I am wondering where all the guests disappeared when the picture was taken.....

3514

Monday, March 28th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Warm and sunny, with everything growing madly.

The enclosures are the sum and substance of today's 1st class mail. From the card, I gather the Monroe-Shreveport contact continues and that I am perfectly right in continuing my book reviews.

As to the letter, I know you will be glad to learn something about the identity of the person to whom "A Clouded Star" is dedicated. I thought you might want to make a note on the dedication page of your copy. Come to think of it, probably not one person out of a thousand, in glancing at the name of the individual to whom the average book is dedicated, ever knows much about the person and can only guess as to the sentiments that impelled the author to make such a choice. As I recall, it was frequently the custom in the 18th century for authors to dedicate their books most elaborately to some influential potentate or political big wig, and usually in a language so flowery that the reader knew just about as little after reading the thing as he did before, so far as the relations between the author and the person to whom the book was dedicated went. In view of the information supplied by the "arrish letter, it would seem to me considerable interest would be added to many a book where something more added than the mere name, as at present, and something a little less super-duper as in the 17th and 18th centuries.

While I think of it, I must tell you something amusing that happened last Monday afternoon, just a short time before the guests arrived for the party. For years, on the library mantle, stood three elegant pure white vases. For years Sister had worried her mother about giving them to her, but the Madam somehow and surprisingly resisted.

Following the funeral, the General decided it was perhaps just as well that the vases be put away and they were. On Monday afternoon Celeste suggested that they might lend a pleasant note to the general decoration if they were returned to their former places for the afternoon. Since everything which had been put under lock and key had been placed in the armoirs, I marched to the store and got the keys from the safe. But picture my surprise, and everyone else's, when on going through the armoirs, no vases were found.

Funny chanced to be present and he said he had helped the General pack them into a large cardboard carton, but he didn't know where they had been placed, following the packing.

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Somehow Cleste thought I had placed them in the armoires originally, and somehow I assumed that she had assisted at the business, but, of course, it turned out that both of us were wrong. A hurried search of the house, room ~~xxx~~ by room and through the attic, but no white vases ever came to light.

It is possible that Joe Henry may have stored them in one of his locked trunks in one of the other houses, or it may be the General had them placed somewhere in the big house without having them locked up. In any event, the Wenks are scheduled to come this week end, and if they only knew the things are flying around, - no one knowing where, - it would certainly be a field day for little and big Wenks, rooting all over the place.

Ten more crinums came to hand this morning, and what with the excessive dampness still obtaining under foot at Arenbourg, I got them set out under fairly favorable circumstances, although it was a little too warm for perfection in such matters. To my surprise, two of those which I put out last week had developed a stalk 8 inches high, supporting huge buds. It took fortitude to do so, but I snipped them off without giving my curiosity the satisfaction of finding out what color the flowers would be, for it seemed better that all the strength this first year should go back into the bulb. But it is good to know that whatever the hue may be, - and I think it is pale salmon, the plants themselves are thriving.

Last night I missed all radio programs except "Who Said That", for I somehow wanted to finish "Philosopher's Holiday", and did. The last chapter moves back from the autobiographical manner and concerns itself with more philosophical speculation. But I have enjoyed the book and will probably find Richard Wright's Black Boy in quite a different vein. But a day or so will elapse before I turn to it, for tonight I want to do a few other things on this machine and I have a couple of physical things to attend to, not the least of which is daubing my stomach with some kind of grease, for I must have got tangled up with something which irritated my skin at that particular place while pulling around in the weeds today. I think poison ivy hasn't started doing business yet this season, so I assume it must be something else.

With summer seemingly upon us, I ought to begin thinking about taking the wool tack, - mattress, - from the regular mattress over which it reposes during the winter, and at the same time consider removing the curtains from my bed. But growing accustomed to things, I am slothful about change, and nothing delights me more than the gay silvered cones suspended on their gay red ribbons, which still hang on my desk lamp, as from Christmas.....

3516

Tuesday, March 29th, 1949.
Memorandum:
Twice blessed was I today when the postman brought me yours of the 24th and the 25th. So many treasures in one go-round.

I had heard on the radio that the Flower Show was being held, - but that was all. Your splendid account of it therefore was all news to me and I appreciate every word. I don't know Mrs. Love of Laurel, Miss. which, if one leaves out the Miss, sounds like a gay 90 title for a novel, doesn't it. I have some friends in Laurel and Miss Myra gets over that way every once in a while, and I shall ask for particulars about the lady, and shall pass them along.

The Nesbitt book sounds delightful, and what it reveals about Mrs. R.'s attitude concerning the transfer rather than the dismissal of servants sounds so much like one might expect. What a grand number she is.

If memory serves, it was about the time the King and Queen were being entertained at the White House that P. D. R. Jr., and Ethel Dupont were in the heights of their romance, which possibly accounts for their disdain, - lucky people, - of the clock. I noticed on the Who Said That program that Mrs. R. was quoted as saying she couldn't imagine anyone wanting to go into politics, but if her son wished to, she was all in favor of him carrying through his desires. How like her, too.

Long before now I should have congratulated you on the break that developed along about the right time giving you a momentary breathing spell. It does seem as though it couldn't have come at a better time. I only hope, - but doubt, - that you made the most of it by doing as little as possible.

Cleste handed me the enclosed clipping which came from today's Times Picayune, I believe. I had heard it on the Saturday night news broadcast, and I was surprised to hear the Saxon name mentioned, for somehow he had never mentioned this episode to me, but it may have occurred years ago and he forgotten it. There is a Joseph family living in this Parish, one Eli Joseph, but none of my friends seem to know the one mentioned in this clipping, and as it may be he is from the New Orleans area and no kin to local residents.

I had a pleasant experience when, after pattering around last night, I finally decided to play just one page of "Black Boy". The first word on the record is always the title, and before another word was spoken I was, I know not why, surprised to recognize

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a different racial voice than usually characterizes Talking Book recorders. Definitely it was a negro. And then, as the introduction progressed, and the name of the reader was spoken, I was indebted to you, as so many thousands of times I am, for having once acquainted me with the particulars regarding the cast of an all negro theatrical performance on the New York stage, for when the voice said: "Read by Canada Lee, - the program instantly springing back to my mind along with some of the names, which you had so thoughtfully called to my attention ever so far back.

Surely the Foundation is to be congratulated for enlisting the services of a negro to read such an autobiographical book as Richard Wright's opus. As so frequently happens, I found myself tending to pay less attention to what was being said as the way it was being pronounced and rendered, - a fault I am frequently having to correct whenever Alexander Scourby is on the disks. I read but a couple of pages, but that was enough for one sitting, for I was a little sleepy, - and besides, I wanted to write Mr. Lee a letter, thanking him for the pleasure his performance was affording me and asking him if he would care to read Ziba if I can get old Xenophon to certify it for the Foundation.

It drizzled much today, but the little descending cloud wisps were so spaced as to merely keep everything damp but not soaked. I got in a bit of digging at Johnson grass at Arenbourg, and drenched but once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

I was pleased this afternoon when J. H. passed by Yucca with some contractors to take a look at the foundations of this house. Tomorrow will be a fairly busy day, for before dawn I shall want to remove much of Mr. Belle's furniture from the back gallery and house it, - Heaven knows where, and by 8 o'clock I must take off for town for another session, while in the afternoon people are supposed to pass this way, all of which indicates that I shall probably be almost as busy flying about on your natal day as you will be at celebrating. I don't care how the weather is in these parts, for either sun or rain will be good grist for our mill, but I am hoping with all my heart that Manhattan weather will be all blue and gold, for I am sure you will have occasion to be flying about, and it will be so much easier if you aren't bogged down with rubbers, parasol and raincoat.

I missed the Fred Allen show with Hildegarde on Sunday and tonight I am missing Bob Hope and Fibber McGee, but in reality I haven't really missed any of them, since chatting with you is in a category leaving them out but completely and good will be tomorrow, for no matter how much business the mere present excitement will be functioning along quite beside the mere present excitement, and rejoicing silently in celebration of the 30th.....

Another word was spoken I was, I know not why, surprised to recognize

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Wednesday, March 30th, 1949.

Memorandum:

It's your birthday, and how happy I hope it has been. If you can top it off, as I am about to do, by folding up early, then everything will be perfection.

I was up and doing a little after four this morning, going full tilt until five minutes before it was time for me to take off for town, and five minutes, I discovered, isn't too long for a shower when one is already all a-drip. But I made it do alright, leaving the workmen to tear up the flooring of my back gallery as best they might. My sitting in town was a little longer than usual, and so I posted my mail in Watchitoches before returning here around 11.

I was still going strong at 2:30, trying to find places to stack furniture inside the house, and cleaning as I proceeded. And then a servant came to tell me that the Rands had left some fine magnolias, - grandiflora, - at the front gate for me. I accordingly got a truck and had them hauled to Arenbourg, where I remained to plant them. Isn't it grand that they should have arrived on this particular date.

Just as I was finishing setting in the last one a shower began, - much to my delight, for it was precisely what they needed most at just that moment. My shirt and pants were sticking tight to me as I marched back toward Yucca, with little streamlets cascading along my legs down into my shoes, - and I loved it, it was so cool and nice, and meant so much to your little friends, just newly established.

Before I could change, on reaching home, I had a message from the store, - people to see me and a telephone from Mr. Bachelier, how has left the hospital and is staying with some friends in town. I chatted with him a few minutes and promised to run up to town to see him tomorrow or Friday, and I guess it will be the latter, since I want to be here as much as possible while the house is being jacked up.

My clothes were beginning to feel clammy enough but I sat it out with my visitors who, fortunately, had sense enough to leave as soon as the rain let up.

Then I jumped into my tub for a hot bath but had to rise from my sea shell to answer the door. Fortunately this time it was

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some colored youth from "Little River whom I didn't know but whom I could ask to carry on at conversation while I splashed through my belated rinse off. But before I was finished, another tap, and it was Dr. Rand and Ed Rand, who dropped by for a little chat and a little sip. I was glad they came for I could thus pay Ed Rand for the magnolias and not have to bother about sending him the money or keep on the look out for him at the camp. He wanted to charge us the quoted rate, as appears in dealer's catalogues, covering such ditems, but I know that it is next to impossible to get them at all this year, and what's more I think it is worth something to have the things delivered direct, for not only is the inconvenience thus eliminated, but the plants themselves have such a better chance to "catch" when direct delivery instead of American Express is taken into account. I accordingly accepted the change he gave me and then handed it back, asking that he give it to his little daughter as a present from the newly planted trees.

Tomorrow morning before the carpenters arrive at Yucca to continue their carryings on, I shall slide up to Arenbourg and give the new trees a little trimming so their attempt at getting a hold on life in their new situation will be the easier.

I haven't heard a radio all day, so know nothing about what's going on in the outside world and what the Weather Man has to offer for tonight and tomorrow. But what with low hanging clouds still blotting out the stars, I reckon we may look for additional humidity at least, and perhaps some more little showers. - I hope. As I understand it, a cold mass of air got stuck up Dora's way, - or somewhere to the North of us, so that the warm breezes from the Gulf are encountering cooler layers of air in this region and condensing madly, - for the particular benefit of the Arenbourg children, - and the same business may keep right on going, so far as I am concerned, for every drop of it is grist to our mill.

Of the enclosures, they aren't anything special, although the one from Joe and Juanita is nice. Joe will be surprised when he learns Yucca has been fixed up before he gets here for Easter. He would have probably have done a more perfect job, but his visit will probably occur when the weather is dry and the cotton fields will have claimed much of the present labor now so abundantly present. As for the other enclosure, it certainly held news, for I had heard nothing of Sister's frolic with the gas stove. But I reckon it was more noise than anything else, for the clerk told me today that J. H. had a letter from her, so she can't have been quite so shattered as she might have been.

And now, I fold, and may the same blessing be imminent for you. I hope it has been a happy day for you, and it was so pleasant planting the grandifloras today, feeling as I did that I wasn't exactly alone in putting down the foundations of these green pillars for the morrow.

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I shall explore it a little, if something else doesn't get ahead

Thursday, March 31st, 1949.

Thirty million surprises for Arenbourg today. How nice for Arenbourg, and you, and me!

Wasn't it odd, how on the 28th you should have spoken of some commemorative doings at Arenbourg on the 30th and then when the 30th arrived, as reported last night, the magnolias arrived in just the proper moment of the 30th for the celebration.

And I am so glad you mentioned gardenias, for the cold has been hard on the young ones and I really think we ought to get some going straight off. I am accordingly writing Ed Rand tonight, so that Arenbourg's festivals will go slap ahead, thanks to your noble handiwork.

How characteristically sweet of you to share your natal day with Malrose, and I shall hold the thought on all items selected for the Arenbourg birthday that they prosper mightily.

And thanks no end for telling me of so many interesting news items, none of which had come my way. Poor Madam Tutton appears to have her pathway of life dogged by "misere". Never did I hear of such a rich person having such an unhappy go of it.

And thanks for telling me of the impending Chevalier broadcasts. I shall sample the air waves about 10:30 your time and see if I can't draw something out of the middle of Bible Slappers and Patent Medicine practioners. The L. Bamberger station, W O R used to be hooked up with Mutual, and Mutual and American Broadcasting programs used to come over one of the Alexandria stations, so it is possible that in that area I may find something.

I could bathe the Columbia stations in this area on Sunday for they give nothing at all but Church programs from 7:15 until 12:30, and most of the sermons are mighty dull fare. All denominations get a half hour or so go at the ether, and surely after anyone has listened to three or four at a straight sitting, enough turns out to be enough, especially as many of them are sheer twaddle. - don't you love that word.

I should have liked to hear about old Balsac, of whom I know nothing, and especially if John Kieran was having his say about the man. I believe I have Pere Geriot in the Post Office, and

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I shall explore it a little, if something else doesn't get ahead of the Reverend Pere.

I didn't know that Mr. Scourby had read the items from the Bible which you mention, and I want to have a go at the Psalms with him forthwith. His rendition of the Songs of Solomon is marvelously done. I haven't read it in a couple of years, but must get it for some Spring reading, for it is a delight.

I shall probably not finish Black Boy unless other items I am expecting fail to turn up promptly. I think the Wright book is well done, and I am bound to admire his short effective sentences, - an Art I was never able to develop. But I find the book rather more sad than I care to take in prolonged doses. I get much pleasure out of Canada Lee's reading, however, for he puts in lots of expression and withal sounds exactly like a composite picture of a dozen of my local friends talking, assuming that a composite picture may be a talking picture, too. The way he slides over some words and enunciates others with great care is symbolic of the tutored and untutored negroes of my acquaintance, - and accordingly his version seems ever so perfect to type, - to both types, on the same page. Even Richard Wright seems to write that way sometimes, although it is difficult for me to illustrate off hand. Perhaps a poor case in point is his study case, it would seem, in his choice, for example, of a preposition. When a white person in writing or speaking, might use the word "on", the Black Boy author is likely to use "upon". I recall that particular word, in fact, but don't remember the phrase, - something like "I sat on my book", as the white person might say it, while Mr. Wright might pen it: "I sat upon my book". That is a poor illustration but it may serve to give some hint as to the little differences which I thoroughly enjoy stumbling over.

After much pulling and hauling and packing up and jacking around, the main business of tucca repairs was accomplished today. I can't see that the house was raised an inch, - and six inches was the minimum required. But portions of the decayed sills were removed and brick and stone substituted for stronger supports, which, I am told, will not accomplish the original hopes, but will save the house from sinking further, - and that is something to be thankful for, - if it will just "stay put" for a while. Eventually I shall put a bee in Joe Henry's bonnet, and a complete and thorough job will be executed. But it is good to know in the mean time, that one isn't likely to sink any nearer China than at present.

The balance of the week will be busy enough, - to town tomorrow to see Mr. Bachelier, and then home to push the workmen further to get the place in a semblance of order before the advent of impending pilgrims and all the excitement of the morning. I had a glorious time at Arenbourg early this morning, and the new birthday magnolias and defoliating them so that every favorable circumstance could assist them in "catching". Ample sun today after last night's shower, and it really did look and seem like birthday time in our little corner.

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Friday, April 1st, 1949. Back to the Xmas business. I had been expecting to go to the Xmas business, but the Xmas business had been completed and the Xmas business was over. I had been expecting to go to the Xmas business, but the Xmas business had been completed and the Xmas business was over. I had been expecting to go to the Xmas business, but the Xmas business had been completed and the Xmas business was over.

Memorandum: Brace yourself against boredom. For such will be the result of trying to read this, since I write it half asleep myself.

The Lord knows today has been busy enough, but I guess I'm a little tired contemplating this week end, - what with the avalanche of pilgrims poised to descend upon us tomorrow, - delegates to the Foreign Language Association, meeting currently in town. And then there are the Wenks, and today I learn that on the 24th some Society to which Celeste belongs will honor us in numbers about equal to the visiting Editors, and on the 25th we shall have the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce on our lap. It isn't clear to me as yet why the C. C. C. C. - Chamber of Commerce of the Crescent City should be heading in here unless it be that they "want to get away from it all" and who knows, away from little Miss Alberta, too.

Toss in an Easter week end with most of the "enrys" bustling about and the usual run of the mill runners of the road, and something tells me I might well take myself to Little River or some such secluded nook until after the pilgrimage peak has passed.

My day began fairly early with a round to Arenbourg and back. Home again, I found a couple of the men working on the tucca foundations to have severe sore throats, and I had to doctor them a little before taking off for town to visit Mr. Bachelier.

I found him at the home of the Suttons, - a charming rambling brick house facing front street, with delightful lounges at the back of the house, giving on a delicious garden that leads down to Cane River.

Mr. Bachelier seemed better than I had anticipated, although I didn't get a good look at him for a large window on the far side of his bed gave on to brilliant sunshine while the bed lamp just above his head put the finishing touch on a complete elimination of his features so far as I was concerned.

But I am happy that he seemed able to talk as animatedly as ever and that he is so delightfully housed, and within easy reach of the lady doctor who lives but a couple of houses away on the opposite side of the street. The Sutton house appears adequately staffed with servants and the faint aroma of cooking I encountered when quitting the place left no doubt in my mind that the food, - so important to building him up, must be of unique excellence. I came home the happier for having spent a couple of hours with him.

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Back home well before dinner, I found the Yucca business had been completed during my absence and the workmen gone. They didn't succeed in elevating the house much, but the did assure me that it can settle no further, - and that satisfies me. In the event they have mis-calculated the permanence of their handiwork, Joe Henry can take a few tucks in the piece when he comes for Easter.

I devoted myself to putting things back to rights until about 3 o'clock when Celeste came to ask me if I would have coffee with her and some friends who were anxious to make a tour. I don't know who they all were, but included Mrs. Yaeger, wife of the Cloutierville doctor and some Madam O'Quinn whose husband's name had thus been metamorphosed from Aucoin, - and either one seems funny enough off hand.

If I ever get around to reading again, I shall take up Bernard Fay's "Two Franklins" which appeared along about 1933. I believe. In spite of his association, - or perhaps because of it, Mr. Fay's studies on the American Revolutionary period seldom suggest his prolonged friendship with Gertrude Stein and "atisse. I always like the little man and I know not why but somehow found it difficult to reconcile his apple red cheeks and his artificial leg, for somehow in my mind if one lost a leg in a war, one seldom if ever brought forth health glows about the chops. But little Bernard did just that, and with humor and gaiety. I am under the impression he is expounding one of his pet theories that the most potent Revolution in America at the end of the 18th century wasn't centered so much in the military operations of 1776 - 1783, but rather in the change of mind that took place among the citizens generally from about 1790 to 1800, when the Washington-Hamilton theories of procedure gave way to the Jeffersonian concepts, and I suppose this book will demonstrate what influences the two Franklins set in motion along the Jeffersonian line, - old Benjamin and his grandson, B. F. Bache. I can easily put Black Boy aside for little Bernard Fay and Benjamin Franklin for a time.

My secretary has been working on Dan's house in town for the past couple of weeks and has arrived for a sitting with me about first dark late, on his return from town. But tonight he didn't come, for Dan had brought a friend down from town with him, and the latter had to be taken back, but as both gentlemen were too high to drive, Mr. Brew was pressed into service as driver. Murrell accordingly passed this way and after we had finished, a number of other visitors came by ones and twos, not so much for the charm of my scintillating society as because they would rather spend a couple of hours here than at the honkey-tonk waiting for the 9 o'clock movie to be shown. I guess 8 or 10 people graced my boudoir, including the Dark Duke, Little "ing, Peter, Lindburg, Choaly Boy and so on, and I found them refreshing after the stoggy pilgrims of the superior race who had honored me in the afternoon. But by now you are undoubtedly dozing, and so must I right now.....

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Sunday, April 3rd, 1949.

Memorandum:

At first it seemed to remind me of Teniel's illustrations for "Alice au Pays des Merveilles", but later I merely felt like the after-math to one of those Coney Island places, decked out with crazy mirrors wherein fat people appear thin, thin people fat, short people tall and tall one short. Somehow other values were equally transformed, with concrete blocks dissapating into shadows and shadows taking on the substance of concrete blocks. Truths automatically became falsehoods and falsehoods truths, wisdom folly and folly profoundity people transformed from human beings into evil spirits, but, I am sorry to say, I saw no evil spirits who became particularly good. In fine, as I have so often remarked before, - "You don't have to be, but it helps out a lot if you are"

Sunday evening witnessed plenty of pilgrims, but none from Wache or New Orleans, but the Wenks came Saturday afternoon bringing me chocolate milk, wine, a chocolate cake, two hats and a big bowl of broiled shrimp with a splendid sauce. They left Sunday, leaving me a ten dollar bill and the worst headache I can remember.

I shall drink the chocolate milk. The wine, - a dry St. Sauterne which I don't care much for, will go to Dr. Knipmayer. The cake I shall give to my colored friends, along with the hats, - and the sauce will go to Celeste and the cats have already fattened themselves on the shrimp. The ten dollar bill will go in an envelope first and thence back to its owner, while the headache I have already tried to palm off on four different aspirin tablets, - but it has been rejected in each instance, and so I guess I shall have to keep it for a while.

They also divested the Madam's bed of its electric blanket and brought it to me, - I having steadfastly rejected all offers of it as a gift from last November. With summer "busting out" all over the place, I have as much need for an electric blanket as my cat has of a pocketbook, and I have already put the thing in moth-balls, and I wish I might say "That is that", but it isn't the half of it, but I shall try to skip most of the other individual noises in the week-end racket.

Off hand, it might seem that the ten dollar bill was a gift, but when I explain that I caught Sister A going through the locked armoirs with a master key, and add that an hour later, she went to the safe, and asked if he would mind getting the keys to the armoirs from the safe in the store and going through them with her, you may well imagine that the ten dollars is undoubtedly something in the manner of a hush-hush present.

As I was the last one to have the keys when looking for the whit

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vases to decorate the mantle when the editors were here, and since, on opening them the next time, should anyone notice something missing, the guilty finger would seemingly point at me, the whole thing takes on an unpleasant angle. You may readily believe I am looking forward to a confidential little chat with then General when he next passes this way.

A large hat box, containing much of the stuff brought to me was placed, after being emptied, in the room the Wenks occupied. They forgot the darned thing when they pulled out this afternoon, and in passing through the house later, I noticed a vase I had bought in town years ago was sticking out. I think it cost ten cents originally. On further investigation, I ran into quite a bit of other plunder. By the time a letter comes to hand from Shreveport regarding this particular box, it will have disappeared, you know how servants are about throwing things out.

The stuff made up out of whole cloth, and told to me as gospel truth, episodes that had transpired in my presence during the last years of the Madam's life, were beyond belief. And so when she told me the whole matter of settlement of the estate had been completed, I would be soft in the head if I believed any of it. Outside family tales, about the only thing I heard of interest, and there might be some truth in this, - she is about to sit for her portrait for a thousand dollars to the artist, a Frenchman I know who has painted 48 portraits for various and sundry oil people in the Shreveport area at that price.

Is it any wonder I pause for a fifth asperin?

I might add another detail, which, according to the viewpoint of the individual is either minor or major. It beautifully illustrates the finesse of both husband and wife. I chanced to be passing through the kitchen this morning where Mattie was preparing coffee and Sam Peace was attending to something or other. Sister was there and asked me to wait just a minute for her husband who appeared in a moment. You can picture my surprise when he opened a copy of "The Friends of Joe Gilmore", and began reading the account of Mattie's philanderings with a boy friend while married to Sam Peace when the latter ended the extra marital carryings-on by killing Mattie's boy friend. Sister glistening with glee, threw in simplified words and additional details to refresh Mattie's and Sam's minds. If you are acquainted with this chapter, - and I believe you are, - you may readily imagine how utterly flabbergasted were the ex-husband and wife.

Alright, this isn't all, but it's a fair sample of what a visit from the Wenks means. Thank Heavens I leave a little later for the dentist's in the morning and Rudolph and his friends will pass this way during the day. It may help a little in be-fogging my memory of this cock-eyed week end.....

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Monday, April 4th, 1949.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter in today's post, - yours of your natal day, indicating that the "colic" had come to your true hand on schedule.

I am so glad that up to the time of writing, your day was going along nicely and I feel certain that your evening celebration was a happy occasion, especially because of the good friends who would be present. I shall be so glad to look for full particulars in a later post.

Your birthday children at Arenbourg seem to be getting a break in the weather, which remains fairly cool and altogether cloudy, with occasional little showers to help out with their feeding habits. It sprinkled when Celeste and I headed for town this morning but a pale sun seeped through the mists on our return before noon. It repeated the routine in two hour intervals throughout the day and the promise for tomorrow is more rain, which is precisely what we need for them to get well established.

Rudolph and his friends arrived about 12:30, having driven from New Orleans this morning and having a picnic in the hills of Gorham before coming down to the river bottoms. We had coffee in the library and a pleasant sitting at Yucca for an hour or so afterward. Then we dropped in on Celeste and her Mother for a little pick-up and by three o'clock or 3:30, they were in the big road again, heading out for Texas and home.

They were charming people, one lady and two gentlemen, and I had a fine time, since I did most of the talking.

Rudolph told me he had talked with little Miss Alberta on the phone and that she asked him to tell me she would be up here to paint magnolias in May. He said he had seen James Cunningham and had not be favorably impressed, since he seldom appears to advantage when intoxicated and that he was just that, although sufficiently sober to ask Rudolph to tell me he would be passing by Melrose to spend the night on either this coming Thursday or next. I shall try to get his address to forestall that honor, if the Thursday in question is a couple of weeks away.

The "ark Duke and little King" dropped in last night just in

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as Fred Allen was going on the air, and so I missed him, but I did read a few pages afterward from B. Fay's Two Franklins, and liked them. I laid myself down on my bed to listen to "Who Said That" but of course fell asleep before the second word had been spoken.

Mr. Fay's account of life at Passy when little B. F. Bachem was staying with his grandpa of course reminded me of Mr. Feuchtwanger's Proud Destiny, and I suppose the one book increases the interest of the other so far as accounts go of life in that particular neighborhood. Several of the same names of neighbors and visitors appear in both books, although the treatment and stress of such personages are quite different. I found myself recalling that I once read a biography of Mme. Helvetius, but it must have been a million years ago, for I don't seem to remember what ever happened to this sympathetic friend of the good philosopher's days in Paris. Vaguely it seems to me she died in the Passy neighborhood about the time the Revolution got to going real strong, although I am not quite certain. So often in childhood I was guilty of neglecting to finish a biography of a person or a place if I suspected that they were headed for destruction in the Revolution, and now I seem to be paying the price of ignorance in thus not having forced myself to follow the painful histories through to the end. That was one good thing about Baedeker and Machette, for their abrupt notation of the ending of some beloved person or place was stumbled over almost before one unsuspectingly sensed that "Fin" was written in the same paragraph or line mentioning the person or property. How well do I remember avoiding any account of the wreck and disappearance of Marly, but for years, until, at long last, I stumbled over the date in some old Guide or other, after which I summoned up sufficient courage to read about those events in more elaborate presentations in books I had left off reading for so long.

Well do I still remember weeping over the death of a pet canary and the unhappiest day of my childhood when I learned there really was no Santa Claus, but that is probably what all children do. But for a child to shed tears over the knowledge of the destruction of a place and its gardens, a hundred years or so before the child first saw the light of day, that surely must be most unnatural, and I suppose the Dr. Flanders Dunbars could do something about such a confession and confidence, although I suspect they might well dismiss the whole thing as a perfect example of what a crack-pot emotionalism I could stir up to make myself miserable.

But how in the world did I get so far off the track, and so arrive at the terminus of this Memo before I knew it. Sufficient it is to say that my day has been a happy one, thanks to your nice, nice letter, and, may I add, that all four of your mimosas at Arenbroug opened on March 30th, expressly, - obviously, to do you honor.....

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On Tuesday, April 5th, 1949.

Memorandum: I have had a busy day, and liked all of it.

I worked at Arenbroug until 8:30, and was back again by 9:30 remaining until after 11, pattering about mostly, but getting quite a few odds and ends done, removing excess growth from the pears and crepe myrtles and such like.

I saw Madam Regard alone for a few minutes at 9 o'clock, and she spoke of Church doings, which seem to be incessant these pre-Easter days. On Sunday, she remarked, they are taking up a special offering to be contributed to the relief of displaced persons in Europe. That was my big opportunity, and she kindly accepted the ten dollar bill Sister had given me to put in the collection plate. If J. H. knew about such business, he would say: "Hal, man, money is money". But somehow I don't want to have anything to do with Wenk currency.

But the delights of the dawn were eclipsed by the postman's pouch, and I hasten to correct the libel you leveled at your letter, for it was elegant throughout. I am so glad to have the details regarding your festivities, which sounded so nice. I believe the Chateaubrian must be a Manhattan project, new since my day. And I am wondering about their selection of the name, for save from referring to it as the author, I haven't thought of it except in regard to a menu at a wonderful little restaurant, tucked away on a side street, not too far from the Bourse, where I used to order their marvelously juicy Chateaubrians with the greatest abandon.

And isn't it good that the Red Shoes turned out so delightfully. I am ever so indebted to you for telling me about it, for I am sure people passing this way will be talking about it, and I shall enjoy the conversation so much more, being thus acquainted with the nature of the film.

And thanks, too, for telling me about the John Erskine memoirs, of whose existence I was quite ignorant. Don't bother to look up the exact title right now, for I am bogged down in reading material. Sometime later in the season, if you should chance to run across it, I shall be glad to have it, - but early autumn will be soon enough.

I am so glad you heard the Churchill speech, and if I haven't already said so, may I remark that I listened to it, too, and was hoping you might be so fortunate, for he is certainly a splendid speaker and his nicety of balance between the profound and humorous makes speeches of his like the M. T. one ever so palatable.

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On returning to Yucca from Arenbourg this morning, I removed my beard with greater leisure than usual, for I was a little weary. Imagine my surprise, therefore, when sauntering to the big house for dinner, I discovered two people waiting to see me. They were grand, - Mr. and Mrs. Carl "arness of San Diego, California. You will laugh, even as did I, when you learn their street address is 3030. Zola. Just so long as it was 5050.

They were driven to New Orleans from San Diego for a little outing, and had stopped off to visit their friends in Norman, Oklahoma, the Hollands, and if I had ever known it, I had forgotten that the Hollands are the people with whom Mr. Pipes resides. They said he had sold them on the idea of "elrose and so they had come to Shreveport yesterday where they remained for the night, and had driven down to "atchitoches and registered at the hotel, expecting to spend the night there, and leave tomorrow for "atchez, and thence to New Orleans.

What with the pilgrimage just over in the Bluff City, I concluded my friends must be tired of people and so I gave them no letters, but I did give them a little note to Miss Alberta so they might see the old Danile Clark House and little Miss A. to boot.

They were gracious enough to accept my invitation to dine with us at "elrose, and after dinner we came over to Yucca and chatted for an hour or so. They wanted to see "lemence and so "drove down there with them, and they took her picture on color film, she standing on her steps beneath a shower of wisteria blossoms, which ought to turn out quite gay.

I suppose they are 55 or 60, and retired. They mentioned a home in North California on the Colorado River, but from the card I take it this must be a camp or a country place. They were that rare type with whom one begins talking slap off just as though one had been old friends for years, and everything they had to say was of interest. They, too, were equally interested in flowers, architecture, history, painting, fishing and metals, among other things, and there was much about the place on which they could feast their eyes. At 3 o'clock, I took them over to see St. Augustin's Church and the graveyard, and we wanted to run back to Little River, but the roads were too muddy, and so they headed back to town a little before 4, where upon I returned to my doings at Arenbourg, - and so the day unravelled.

From the enclosure, you will gather Dora doesn't like Lyle's Friends of "oe "ilmore. I think there must be a line in it about Clemence stealing a wig or some such, and that probably didn't add to Dora's enjoyment.

I'm so glad you enjoy the Carmolite volume. Feel perfectly free to mention it in any way. If ever, regarding any point or person, one should use French, I shall advise you in advance, so you may always feel perfectly free and untrammelled. Thanks again for the grand letter, - it is so grand.....

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Wednesday, April 6th, 1949.

Memorandum: I have been thinking of you and your family for some time.

Last night, I awoke to a tapping on my window. It was a little after 11. The moon shone bright on the White Garden. The tall figure of Peter loomed in silhouette on the dark gallery against the moonlit back drop.

Peter was giggling. He asked if he might have a little glass of wine and a cigarette. He wanted to tell me something, in thus pausing at Yucca, on his way from the Little River lane where he has lived the past three years with Maybelle, before he continued along his journey across the cotton patch to Pury's house, hard by the "and Camp on the margin of the river.

Maybelle is "attie's sister and a bag. She used to be Clemence's daughter-in-law, having married and become the mother of four or five children by King. But they separated and for no reason known to anyone save God and Olivier Newman, the latter youth married her a day or two before he enlisted in the Army three years ago this month. He hasn't been home since, but "aybelle has received a fifty dollar check from the Government monthly since he left.

Peter immediately moved in with Maybelle when Olivier headed out for a military career and has kept "aybelle from being lonely ever since. Sometimes a little cloud has passed over my mind, anticipating a return of the warrior some day or other, and probably a stabbing or a shooting or some such. But such dire forebodings never seemed to disturb Peter's dreams.

I gave Peter his little glass of wine and a cigarette, and he continued giggling. He said when he had reached home last night after driving the tractor all day, he had draped his hips across the bed for a couple of hours. And then, being rested, he ate supper with the children and "aybelle. Just as they had had finished, someone knocked on the door. It was Olivier, home at long last from the wars. Maybelle, a little surprised, welcomed her errant husband and Peter asked him if he didn't have some luggage. It seems that he did, - a suitcase, which he had left in the road, not being certain anyone was home, or even that Maybelle still lived in the same place, since they had never exchanged letters during his absence.

Always helpful, Peter accordingly assisted Olivier in bringing the suitcase into the house, and then Peter, thinking husband and wife might have a bit of talking they would like to do by themselves, left them, stopping by to see me for a few minutes as he headed toward Pury's house to spend the night.

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It seems Olivier had walked the 2 or 3 miles from Montrose to Melrose, and had seen no one along the route. His people live somewhere along La Cote Joyeuse, and Olivier will probably visit them, - and learn much, - before Saturday night settles down on Cane River and the local honkey-tonks fling wide their doors. There really ought to be quite a bit of drama, - a little comedy porbably, and possibly a pinch of tragedy, before Sunday's dawn breaks over Louisiana, - but one never can anticipate the mental and emotional reactions of the Melrose negroes, and all we shall have to do is to sit tight and fondle our grapevine along about mid-night, come Saturday.

As for other and less potentially exciting things, I haven't so much to report.

But I did have a glorious day at Aronbourg where everything is growing madly, thanks to the brilliant sunshine after the past week's dews and damps.

I went back after dinner and remained until about 4 when, on returning to Yucca, I found the lady doctor and Rosalyn Aswell who had just dropped in for a little chat, and bearing, - the lady doctor, under one arm her infinitesimal dog and under the other a fine bottle of Vermouth, which Rosalyn and I sampled, and the lady doctor did not. She says that Mr. Bachellier is ever so much better and that she visits him every day at the Buttons. She says he was in a dying condition when she brought him up from Little River, but she believes he is well on the road to fine health again once more. She is under the impression he will not return to Little River to make his residence there, but may remain in the Matchatches area where he has some property, and where he will undoubtedly be more comfortable than in the remote situation wherein his Little River plantation is situated.

She says her husband is doing quite a bit of business with the L. S. U. Department of Archives, selling them old manuscripts he is discovering about the State, and that when recently in St. Francisville, he discovered and purchased a most elegant old hearse, with solid plate glass sides, with much ebony frames and silver hardware. It sounds like something for Mr. Ford's Greenfield Village, but I know not what he proposes doing with the thing. Rosalyn suggested it might be stationed in front the lady doctor's office, as a tacit reminder of what is in store for prospective patients who fail to follow the strictest admonitions of their physician.

The enclosure is interesting, not so much for what it says but what it omits to say. Isn't it odd the way Mrs. Harness never mentioned Mr. and Mrs. Harness. Come to think of it, she seldom if ever mentions the local domestic situation in which he finds himself, and that sets me to wondering if I, on the other hand, don't devote myself too much to that and only that. I hope you will feel perfectly free to advise me on this point, for I dislike the thought of burdening you with too much tattle, even though my intention may be to keep you informed with the day-to-day doings around and about me on the plantation.

So much more to report, and yet I had better

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Thursday, - April 7th, 1949.

Probably two envelopes will arrive by this post, for there are two or three unimportant enclosures that will keep you abreast of things.

It has been a full day, beautiful with sunshine and an 82 degree thermometer reading, but a day flecked with one or two little clouds of disappointment.

I think I mentioned in yesterday's Memo that the lady doctor had reported Mr. Bachellier's health as having greatly improved. I think I failed to mention that her husband had had a letter from Paul Veidh, remarking that his new address would be some New Orleans sanitarium, as he has a serious case of tuberculosis. I told the lady doctor I was not surprised, for long had I thought his appearance and cough indicated as much. She said she had felt so, too, but had never mentioned it to anyone. The Veidh family is being sent into the country, I know not where, and the lady doctor, in characteristic generosity, instructed her husband to write to offer the family assistance, and that in spite of the fact that Paul had nearly wrecked the Worsely household when the latter was in New Orleans, following the Cloutierville interlude.

This morning, while in town, Dr. Eleanor stopped me for a moment on the street, saying she had a million patients waiting for her in her office, but she did want to pause just long enough to tell me that she was hurrying back from a call on Mr. Bachellier who had had a relapse, and was being sent back to the hospital from his friends' home something during the morning. Poor little man, I feel so sorry for him. I have telephoned him on three different days since my visit, but never could I establish contact. I asked the operator to dial, thinking I might be making some error but she reported no response. At first I had thought it might indicate the Buttons had taken him for a drive or back home, but I was puzzled that no servants answered the phone. I still don't understand why I never could get a connection. Now I shall be able to telephone the hospital, and while I wait get much news through such a medium, I may at least establish some kind of contact.

What with the weather so fine, the Rands came up in force in the afternoon. - Dr. and Mrs. Rand, his sister whose name I didn't catch, and his brother, Harry Rand, of Pan Antonio, who is as fine as Dr. Rand. By chance he spoke of a lady in his city who had made

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inquiry about things at Melrose, - Miss De Zavala, - what a name, -
resident of the Historic Markers Association, or some such, and a rather
important post of its type in the Lone Star State. I had been
wanting to write the lady since last November, but somehow couldn't
find her address and always forgot to ask anyone who might know, when
Texas might be visiting Louisiana. Mr. Rand gave me her address, and
I shall write her later tonight.

The Rands staid for supper, and we walked a bit in the garden
afterwards, so the moon was up before I reached home. Dr. and Mrs.
Rand had spent the past two weekends in South Louisiana, making a round
trip of the Native Louisiana Iris centers, and generally disporting
themselves in spite of torrential rains. Their energy astonishes me.

Last week I had asked Dr. Knipmeyer to begin giving me typhoid
shots this Thursday, and I hurried back from town to be here at
10 o'clock when he arrived. I beat him by half an hour and had the
water boiling for his needles, but I got no shot, for it seems he had
seen me hurrying along the street toward the dentist's, and accordingly
assumed I would not be home, - for the first time in years, - when he
passed this way. Perhaps it is just as well he didn't bring his
duffle, for I believe the type of shot he gives for typhoid makes
one a little woozy for a couple of days, and tonight I am glad
I haven't that feeling to contend with. He will undertake the business
next week, and the two succeeding weeks thereafter, which will take
me into the Easter Bunny department feeling like a stuffed owl.
I don't know why I have so long neglected the typhoid shots, for
living in this region, it certainly is a good idea to be braced against
such a malady.

I read a little from "The Two Franklins" last night, and liked
everything I read, although I must say the book is mis-named, for
there isn't much about Dr. Franklin, and B. Franklin Bache is
primarily used as a string on which more brilliant beads are strung.
There is a good account of the doings of Citizen Genet in America.
You will recall he was the brother of Marie Antoinette's Madam de
Campan. Fay says that it was the father of these two famous Genet
children who handled the negotiations with Franklin for Vergennes when
that Minister put over the American aid business, and with such dexterity.
It is interesting, if I remember correctly, that the author of
Proud Destiny didn't give Genet, the elder, much space, perhaps scarcely
a mention. It is interesting that the wife of the elder Genet, a
brilliantly educated man, could neither read nor write herself, and
yet begot children of such exceptional mental capacity, for I believe
Madam Campan's school became the most famous institution of learning of
its type in Europe. Perhaps your edition of the Vigee-Lebrun Memoires
contains reference to it. One edition of mine once did.

I apologize for what I guess has turned out to be a pretty dull
piece. You will forgive me when I tell you, in response to your
recent inquiry, that I brought home the stuff today which has been of
so much concern for such a long time in town, and if you require
elaboration, I feel certain A. J. can toss in some details....

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Friday, April 8th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The marvelous weather continues, with the thermometer in the
mid 80's and every thing growing with the greatest abandon.

I guess I have a slight fever, for I wore a jacket all day and
accomplished very little in any line of endeavor. Everybody has a
cold. Perhaps I have a slight one and don't know it. But be
that as it may, I denied myself the impulse to run in to town to
visit my old friend.

I did call the hospital, however, and learned that he has
been conscious all day but otherwise doesn't seem to have changed any.
I shall write him another little note tonight and send it in by
Celeste tomorrow.

Nothing is so fortunate as an excuse, even a poor one, and so
I used my lack of energy today to cut me some flowers to grace Yucca
over the week end. I have an elegant red rose in a vase for a single
flower, nodding gayly here on my desk before me, and in the
living room an elegant big bunch of red-red crinums from Arenbourg,
flaunting their scarlet beauty a-top a tip-top table, while the
fireplace is banked with milk and wine lilies that exude a perfume so
dense that I doubt if any of it will be carried up the chimney by the
strong draft. I gathered these at Arenbourg before sun rise,
thinking I had swept the flowers completely in the lily section, but
in passing by just before first dark tonight, I noticed a flock
of ghostly new comers, perhaps 3 feet tall, which must have unfolded
during the day.

I am glad to report scant pilgrimaging today, and the only
extra people for dinner was some dullish politician who had landed
a 200 pound gar this morning and entertained himself adequately by
detailing the thrills of the catch. Some of the gars in Cane River
are from 5 to 8 feet long, and withal quite heavy, making it
almost impossible to land them with the type of lines used in
practicing the local piscatorial arts. Once hooked, it seems, the gar
can be brought close to the river bank, and when his bulk makes it
obvious the hook and line used are incapable of bringing him out
on land, someone passes the word around for someone to fetch a
rifle, and the gar is dispatched in that fashion. There is a
State law prohibiting shooting into Cane River, which is under
the auspices of the Conservation department, but the same department
is always glad to look the other way when gars are being dispatched,
for they pray mightily on game fish which the State is trying
to preserve for fishermen.

For supper, we had a couple of lawyers, but as I stuck to

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bread and milk, such legal fare didn't upset my stomach. Besides they were dull anyway.

I read a couple of more pages from the Fay opus last night. He certainly gives an excellent account of the personal relations between Washington and his Secretaries of State and the Treasury, - Jefferson and Hamilton, perhaps as human an account as I have ever run across. He also gave considerable space to the meteoric career of Genet over the 11 month period from the time he landed in Charleston to his withdrawal from his diplomatic post in Philadelphia where the Government was then located. He merely touched upon Genet's marriage to the daughter of Governor Clinton of New York, and his subsequent life as a farmer somewhere in the Empire State. Stangely enough, I don't recall where the farm was situated, but I assume it must have been somewhere in the Hudson Valley. Save for my own curiosity, it doesn't matter where the place really was, but should you ever run across it in any of your reading, I should be glad if you would make a mental note to advise me eventually.

One minor detail but somewhat paradoxical, was the fact that during the 1790's, the portrait of Louis XVI was continuously given prominence in the Halls of Congress, reminding the legislators of the assistance France had given the colonies in their struggle for Freedom, while, following the King's execution, there were presented three times daily in Philadelphia a harrowing spectacle in one of the theatre where the public might pay their money and see the gory spectacle of the beheading of the "French King". "children admitted at half fare".

What a city of contrasts Philadelphia must have been in those early days of the Republic. Quakers in broad brimmed black hats on foot and George Washington in his elegant white coach with filded trimmings, drawn by six white horses, dashes past.

I am sorry to say that at one point, one of the records is slightly marred, and at just the point I should like to hear distinct. It has to do with the Prince of Talleyrand living above a bakery in the City of Brotherly Love, with the baker making faces because the one time Bishop of Autun shares his room with a negress. What in the world would Anna could say about such doings of her husband's great grandpappy.

The fine weather promised for the week end inclines me to assume that we shall probably have too many pilgrims, but the warmth that brings them forth will also keep things growing at Arenbourg, and that makes the game worth the candle. I'll be holding the thought that your week end is good.....

For supper, we had a couple of lawyers, but as I speak to

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Sunday, April 10th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Contrary to Weather Bureau assurances, there was a marvelous rain about 3 o'clock this morning. I'm quite sure the cotton planters, all anxious to finish preparations for planting, didn't like it, but it was grand for our side of the fence.

It was a comparatively quiet week end, and I liked that, too. There were New Orleans pilgrims in the morning, but I never did see them, for they probably came while I was at Arenbourg, although that would have been a little early for the run of the mill type. Later in the day there were a few other people, but of no particular interest.

J. A. mentioned at supper on Saturday night that he thought there would be about as many people here on the 24th of April as there were on March 21st. It is expected that Mayor Morrison of New Orleans will be among those present. I must look up a discharge paper of a French sailor from a French boat, dated at the beginning of the 19th century, for it bears the Delesseps name, and that might interest him, since it is his first name, if memory serves.

I was at Celeste's tonight when J. H. and Dan returned from town. Dan told me that they had gone to the hospital to see Dr. Bachellier and found him ever so much better and that he plans to come to "elrose to spend a few days as soon as he is discharged from the hospital. I hope I can persuade him to eat while he is under my wing, for Dr. Eleanor tells me that the failure of the Buttons and herself to keep him busy in that department, following his first trip to the hospital, is what caused his immediate return there. Perhaps he will be here during the Easter week end, and if so, I shall have more opportunity to keep an eye on him, what with all the Henrys being here to look after each other.

I should have mentioned the enclosure before. It is of no interest, but does give an impression of the lawn at Magnolia.

Some of my little river friends came to see me this afternoon. Some of them are going to "hrevport to work for the summer, and some of them were just making a little Sunday call. There was much gaiety in their comments about the doings at the "elrose Social Club last night where all the negroes go earlier on Saturday nights than formerly, since they have to concentrate their honkey-tonk revels into one session, since the wet law prohibits the place from being open on Sundays as formerly it was.

They said among those present was Peter, seemingly as gay as ever, following the usual routine, and I was hoping you were doing much the same.

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and among others were Maybelle and her solidier husband, Olivier. In several occasions during the past three years, Maybelle, has made scenes when Peter would glance at any other lady of color than herself. But since Olivier apparently hasn't learned that his wife and Peter have been keeping the home fires burning during his absence, he was quite in the dark as to the humor afoot last night when Peter started to swing out with some slip of a girl while Maybelle, as the dutiful wife, couldn't peep at Peter. Apparently Maybelle must have more self control than had Anna Karenina at the races. Come to think of it, the triangle in the contemporary set up in color, is ever so similar to the Russian one that old Tolstoy executed on a higher social level.

Be that as it may, the three pointed geometric figure of Louisiana design seemed to go off much more quietly, the wife keeping her emotions in better control, the husband successfully maintaining his ignorance of actualities and the lover giggling inside, what with his unusual freedom for philandering, with neither protests nor remonstrances issuing from either of the two other triangular points.

In fine, I must say that negroes aren't any better than white folks, but it does look as though they do have a capacity for having more fun on occasion.

The lengthening of the day light hours became more apparent tonight when I experienced some difficulty in establishing contact with either Tulsa or San Antonio, the two clearest National Broadcasting stations for my type of radio. I did finally contact the Fred Allen show, but had gone no further than Senator Clagg-horn than static at my window brought forth Ezra and Peter for a little go-round, which pretty much killed the Ford program. Usually I don't get around to tune in on any station much before 9 or 9:30, and by that time, the coverage umbrella that comes with darkness enables me to get other programs than the Columbia, but as the summer advances, the clarity with which the Mutual and National programs come in recedes further and further into the hours of darkness. At high noon, it is a case of taking Columbia and Columbia alone, - and liking it, - regardless.

A note from Mr. Erwin of the American Foundation asks me to try one of the new type records that is being put out and to report my opinion on the same. It is of metal, rather than composition, as are the usual records, and is supposed to be handier because of its lightness. Why my opinion should be asked, I can't imagine, but I shall glad to give them a report. I must say that most of my opinions, address to the Foundation or the Library of Congress get acknowledged so many months after I send them that I am inclined to forget what the response is in answer to, so much time has elapsed in the interim.

I know full well you must be terribly busy, following the Occidental interlude, and I am hoping you are doing much to conserve your strength in consequence of the resulting pressure.....

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Monday, April 11th, 1949.
Memorandum: I have heard of the volume which you have written and am sure it is an excellent basis for a book. I have also heard of the volume which you have written and am sure it is an excellent basis for a book. I have also heard of the volume which you have written and am sure it is an excellent basis for a book.

How elegant is your Wednesday letter, reaching me in today's post.

And how happily you expressed my own thoughts in regard to early morning hours at Arenbourg. Surely it isn't difficult for you to imagine how it is that I never feel alone as I march up the Bermuda Road, and after hoeing madly for a while, you can easily guess what companionship I feel when I sit down on a bench for a cigarette, resting the while as I gaze along the silvery surface of the river and live in delicious anticipation many a tomorrow's dawn when the mimosas shall have ganged a bit further and our birthday magnolias have grown a little taller.

Save for a few gleams of sunshine today, the sky has been pretty much overcast, and as the weather is warm, the humidity from Sunday morning's early shower remains easily available for our newly arranged plantings. Such conditions are the most favorable imaginable, and let us join in "holding the thought" that from here on out we may have lots of cloudy days until the birthday grandifloras are definitely established.

It is so good of you to acquaint me with so many interesting particulars, all of which were "hot off the griddle" so far as my knowledge of recent happenings go.

"Double Munkadine" certainly sounds promising. I shall keep my ear to the ground for tremors about in from all directions. When Theodore Dreiser did The American Tragedy, the trial he used wasn't more than a decade or so old, which must have required something less of re-recreative labor in bringing the story out with vivid contemporary feeling. But Miss G. must have had a lot of spade work to do, merely in bringing her setting sufficiently into the foreground to attract modern interest. In reading various legal papers in the Adams County Court records, I have, as I presume I have mentioned before, been ever so struck by the human interest aspects, spilling out between even the quaint old phraseology in the Spanish law suits, which, among other things, tended to lessen the spark of the testimony by reducing it into the third person, that is to say, never quoting the witness direct, but merely remarking that the witness said this and that, without ever giving his exact words. Some day I should certainly like to have a go at making a collection of about half a dozen of these cases, beginning with the Spanish era, and bringing them down to

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the present, or at least as near the present as Goat Castle.

I never heard of the volume which "adam G. mentioned as being an excellent basis for comprehending the ante bellum set up. Perhaps we ought to make a mental note of it eventually, and in the mean time, I shall have a look about the local library for such an item.

I always neglect mentioning the enclosures until too far along in my Memo. But the present ones speak for themselves. I must say that I am all in favor of Mr. Kane's recommendations. I wish he had mentioned Mrs. Robinson's address, for I know the lady quite well and should like to drop her a line off hand, without having to bother to turn through an address book or consult a New Orleans telephone book. Martha Robinson is, - and it occurs to me I have forgotten if it is Robinson or Robertson, but however, - she is the mother-in-law of Richard Plaiter who comes by here sometimes. The Plaiters live on Arcadia Plantation in South Louisiana, and inherited five million dollars from the Madam's Cousin Marie Price, of Nashville.

Martha promised to send me some Scarlet Ibis eggs some time back, and this will afford me an excellent excuse to offer congratulations and remind her that local chickens are all in a mood to start hatching out scarlet ugly ducklings.

I am glad you gave me your impressions of Henry Morgan's best medium on the air, for, strange as it must seem, I have never heard his program. Somehow or other, I automatically cut off my radio following the Fred Allen show, usually to operate the old Underwood a little or to consult my Reading Machine, - and so miss everything on the air for the next couple of hours. I did hear him last night on "Who Said That" along with Norman Thomas, Midge Evans, et al. and I found his remarks about Lowella Parsons, Wm. Randolph Hearst and Col. McCormick quite enlightening, so far as his personal opinion and business relations were concerned. I take it he loathes all three.

Madge Evans' voice was a shock, it reminded me over the air so much of Lulu McConnell's. On the stage, Madge Evans seemed ever so different, and when she lived in the Village in the house with Barbara Graves, she impressed me as an unusually cultivated person of 30 while last night she sounded like a bag of 70.

I finished Ray's "Two Franklins" last night, after having learned a heap about B. F. Bache, the grandson of B. Franklin, that I didn't know before. But the book is more properly a study of the Federalist period, and its picture of the contemporary, - 1790,- opinions of Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson and Franklin is very good, but the "Two Franklins" don't exactly dominate every page. It has been a pleasant day for me, thanks as always, to you, and I'm hoping the week has started off nicely for you, too....

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Tuesday, April 12th, 1949

Memorandum: [The text in this block is mirrored and illegible.]

Four years ago, and Red River had spilled into Cain; F. D. R. died and the first magnolia of the season on Melrose unfolded its lovely ivory petals.

Four years later and Red River is on its good behavior: Mr. Truman is doing the best he can which isn't quite enough and the first magnolia of the season at Melrose, although poised to unburden its sweetness, will probably not blossom before Easter.

I have no doubt that Henry Adams, determined to make History a Science rather than an Art, might have made some equation from the above facts. Personally, I can't.

As for the weather, however, I could do quite a bit about that, by way of praise. We had another sprinkle last night, with another drizzle during the morning, with the thermometer in the neighborhood of 60. Nothing could be more advantageous for the birthday gandifloras. Late in the afternoon a few gleams of sunshine shot through the clouds to promise sunshine on the morrow. Two or three days of cloudless weather would be wonderful, and then another shower, and everything ought to be moving in the proper direction.

It was so cool all day, I couldn't deny myself the pleasure of spending much time at Arenbourg, devoting most of my time to chopping weeds which were already threatening to engulf the pivot hedges along the drive. I covered both sides of the drive and got in some good licks around the old Raggedy House where some newly planted butterfly lilies are just putting forth their first leaves. No wonder people passing on the Bermuda Road are impressed with our fine weed patch, for it must appear to be a mess if one doesn't disregard the tares and hold to the thought that so long as the things we want to grow are getting all the attention so that by thus getting ahead of the unwanted weeds, they will in the end dominate and destroy the undesirable stuff that now seems to flourish so mightily, except in proximity to the individual items under cultivation.

both had a good laugh, and they are always worth something, for she wasn't feeling too spry and I was ready for respite from hoeing. Celeste and her quickened interest in Melrose was our source of inspiration.

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As you know, following the Madam's death, it fell to me to put the place back in order for none of the "in-laws" wanted to get gummed up in any controversy that might result therefrom. But now it appears that Celeste may have to entertain a bevy of people from up and down the State within the next week or ten days, - and Lo! her courage rose automatically, and she accordingly deserted her own fireside this morning and with a quarter of a dozen servants, she went after the big house hammer and tongs, re-arranging, scrubbing, cleaning, plishing and the Lord knows what all.

and when she had done, and the furniture had found itself in new situations and the place looked spick and span, everything about the place looked elegant and a little on the "corner" side, while the feeling of the Madam's Melrose which I had tried to retain while putting it back in order had evaporated.

But the Henrys will all like it, and the social drift that passes through when they are bidden to tour will find it perfect, and only the General, possibly, will sigh a little, and those who love the Madam and Melrose for themselves and their distinct personality will find the place more tidy and a little more non-descript.

How right was Madam Roosevelt when she stressed the point that the prolonged absence of any dominant spirit from a house will result in the house losing its former character. Heaven knows the world will probably be the happier, - the part passing through this neck of the woods, with the face lifting process, and best of all, few of them will ever sense they are witnessing the price we pay for progress.

Thanks to the interest manifested by the visiting Editors in Yucca, Celeste suddenly found much interest in the old place and has asked if she might ask her impending guests to inspect the old place. Today, flushed with her success at Melrose, she very kindly offered to assist me in putting some extra finishing touches on my habitation. I thanked her but declined her generous offer, saying, however, that I should be very glad of the servants to lend me a hand, - the same set she was able to round up for her own undertakings. After all, the Early American Wing at the Metropolitan is elegant, but so long as I occupy Yucca, I propose it will be a home primarily and never anything in the nature of a show piece.

The enclosure is nothing, except it does not reveal the New York address of the lady, and the letter, dated Saturday, was cancelled on the same day, but, because of some obvious slow-down in the postal service, did not reach me until today, - 4 days to travel 100 miles. Since I shall not be able to post anything until Wednesday morning, it will of course, be impossible for me to respond. And so the Manhattan interlude will be reported only after it has been completed. It was so kind of you to offer to see the lady, but under the circumstances, we shall, as you suggest, look forward to the meeting later, perhaps in Louisiana.....

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Wednesday, April 13th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The weather continues in the cool 70's, with a hazy cloud formation just made for the Arenbourg children.

At last night was as clear as a bell. Shortly after 10:00 I had finished my mail, two or three of my untutored colored friends dropped by and together we occupied Grandpere Augustin's pew from his little old original Cane River church, now gracing my front gallery, where we watched the moon moving into total eclipse. I'm afraid most of my associates were sufficiently unspoiled mentally as to make the phenomenon seem miraculous, and while I attempted a simplified explanation, I feel certain they fortunately were not budged from their concept that the earth is still the center of the universe and the show they saw veiling the moon was accordingly marvelous and wonderful.

At this afternoon, several of the children stopped off to see me on their way home from school, - 10 to 14 year olds. They had seen the cloud darken the moon, they said but they couldn't see the cloud anywhere else except slap over the moon itself. I asked them if their teachers at St. Athews had mentioned anything about the business, either yesterday or today, but they said nothing had been said in school about it. Education is so wonderfully dished out.....

I believe I sent you a Kane letter from the Picayune the other day about Martha Robinson's efforts to save an old New Orleans house. She telephoned from town this morning, asking J. H., who took the call, if she might see me. When he told me she was driving down for a little conference, he didn't realize she was "kin folks". Well, she came, bringing a couple of ladies with her, a Mrs. Courtney and a Mrs. Balfleur of Lafayette, La. and they staid for dinner, after which the other two ladies did a little tour on their own hook while Mrs. Robinson and I cloistered ourselves at Yucca. I showed her my 1948 birthday Marly and my scrapbook on the same subject, and told her something about "La Societe des amis de Marly", and some what had been done at Ocean, Versailles, etc. I also sketched some thoughts I had once had for forming a chain of little parks about Natchez, centering each link in the lovely old ruins of such places as Punyside, Montebello, Homewood and so on. She apparently liked what she heard, and asked me if I would address the

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New Orleans Chamber of Commerce. I said Yes and No, - that I would not go to New Orleans, but that the Chamber would come here

on the 26th, and I would use my pre-tour talk on Melrose and Yucca as a springboard for the Foundation project. She seemed entranced, and finally asked me if the State is divided into Foundation Districts, identical with the Congressional divisions, would I become President of the District.

We were so busy talking over initial steps in forming the Foundation that we didn't get much opportunity to touch on other subjects, although she did mention that Stanley Arthur is doing a book on old Louisiana houses, - mostly factual data, which probably will not be popular but which, of course, will delight you and me. She didn't know if the thing had gone to press as yet or was still in the stirring stage.

I gave her a flock of names and addresses of people in her area whom she doesn't know but will contact, and remarked in passing that Mrs. Edgar B. Stearns, daughter of old Rosenwald, would undoubtedly lend a sympathetic ear and possibly a few millions. She knows here but hadn't contacted her as yet. She didn't know that the Stearns had once tried to put Rosedown back into its original lovely state, - and failed.

Of the enclosures, only the one from Rudolph is of passing interest. I asked him, on receipt of your recent letter, to let me have some vital statistics concerning Mrs. Weaver, thinking you might like to make note of them in the volume you have recently been reading. You will feel quite free to paste this enclosure in the book, if you care to, or to make whatever transcriptions from the letter you may wish, should you find they cover particulars worth adding to the volume.

I had hoped he would mention some of the lady's peculiarities. For example, she always wore purple, and everything about her had a purple tinge. I think she went to extremes when she carried her enthusiasm for the hue into her bathrooms, slap up to the toilet tissue.

She enjoyed some kind of an annuity of rather ample proportions, I believe, and did much entertaining, always contriving things to make herself the precise pivot around which the world swung. I remember one birthday dinner she gave herself, taking the whole vast hotel restaurant, - something like the Commodore main dining room. Slap in the middle of the room she had the small table placed, under a vast candelabra or chandelier, with only four guests in the entire baronial hall, - herself, her husband, Kenneth and Rudolph.

She wrote two or three genealogical books about the Gustine family of Atchez, - Mrs. William Minor being Rebecca Gustine, but committed the folly of getting as close to Atchez as Melrose but never actually visiting the Bluff City. She worked all her friends and acquaintances like mad, but it must be conceded she actually was interested in things and did more than sigh over a copy of Harper's Bazaar.

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Thursday, April 14th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Just to be different, I shall refer to the enclosure at the outset and to the printed article, mentioned in the Brandon letter, which I am not enclosing at the moment, for I haven't had an opportunity to read any of it as yet, and as I gather from Mrs. Brandon's letter, the piece is contrived by none other than Edith Wyatt Moore and Nola Nance Oliver, I am bound to stumble through a couple of paragraphs at the first opportunity, so curious am I to learn what these two ladies have been able to cook up about S. S. Prentiss.

After returning to Yucca from Arenbourg shortly after sun rise, I found more good excuses for not spending any time at the big house, where Celeste had half a dozen servants converting the place into something akin to "L'Annamaker's Belle Maison." After all, Dr. Knipmayer was scheduled to give me a typhoid shot, and it is merely a matter of detail that he was lassoed for an hour's chat at the big house before he got to see me. My right wing limps a little tonight, but it doesn't bother me otherwise, and I'm sure I shall sleep mightily.

Immediately after dinner I gave a passing glance at what is what in the big house. It looks as pretty as a Sloane's window. In a pile of trash headed for the bonfire, I noticed the "Adam's" favorite catalogues, - book and flower, - ones on whose margins she had made little notations covering items she wanted to purchase. The Wayside one is beautifully illustrated with color reproductions, and the Jackson and Perkins one she had penciled over so heavily during the last few months. When I put the house in order in late November, I saved these few items bearing her notations, placing them at the side of her desk, along with some notes of weaving and some clippings she had placed in a folder for pasting. It seemed to me she gave something special of her to the desk in her own room. But now the desk is bereft of all such trash, in fact a not a vestige of anything of hers remains, but I must admit that the old piece of furniture is beautifully cleaned and polished, and I, as will, I feel certain, meet with approval from the butterfly society of ladies who flit through the place on the day of the impending party. How right, how right was Madam Roosevelt in recommending to her children that they turn Hyde Park over to the Government as an F. D. R. memorial before the personality he imprinted on the place while living had evaporated or had been erased by the advent of others.

I certainly don't think all the big house should be frozen forever

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just as it was when the Madam died, but it did seem to me her little desk in her own room which is not to be occupied, might have been left fairly intact. But then, as you know, I am more sentimental than I probably should be, and progress probably disdains that particular emotion.

Mrs. R. B. Williams telephoned from town today to ask if she might drop in to say howdy on Sunday or Monday. She spoke of Madam Gaither's Muskadine book, - is it Double Muskadine, perhaps spelled with a "c", and says she has found it delightful, thus coinciding with the review you were so good as to pass along. As I understand it, the title is taken from some particular design in weaving, and the threads of that Art run throughout the story, since the racial business or the trial or both seem to be harnessed up to a loom of story telling that shuttles back and forth from cover to cover. I like the idea and I am hoping old Mr. Xenophon will get a move on to have the thing recorded.

At supper tonight, Dan told me that Syble Compton must be able to get about now, for she was at a lawyer's office in town today to apply for a liquor license for the Compton store at the far end of the bridge. Since her husband's death a year or so ago, one of her sons-in-law has been helping in the management of the Compton plantation, and many of the tenants on the place moved elsewhere at the close of the year, feeling that this particular son-in-law doesn't have the feel of plantation operation. Tonight Peter and Clyde Claude Emmett Davis passed by to chat for a little. They were giggling over the news that the Comptons are putting in a couple of pool tables in their honkey-tonk. The boys said that "not a nigger of us-es" knows how to play pool, and don't want to learn, and they figure the green top tables will turn out to be white elephants. The only use they could think of for the equipment was to lend the cues to folks on Saturday nights when things are getting high, figuring that they would make excellent stick one might use in clouting people over the head if they got to clowning too much. A beer bottle is alright, they explained, but one could do a much neater job with one of them sticks.

The radio in the store was playing when I went to the Post Office this morning and I recognized the voice of Maurice Chevalier in a transcription, indicating his program from Paris is broadcast on Thursday nights over the Warchitoches station. Curiously enough, I never seem to tune in on that wave length which, of course, must be very strong in view of the 15 mile proximity. I have so many little odds and ends to attend to tonight, I shall probably not get around in time for the broadcast, but it is nice to know it is available on other Thursday nights.

Today has been one of those when a half dozen things seemed ever so slightly out of joint. They matter not at all, however, thanks to you and our ability to smooth out the ripples by our little chats at the close of day.....

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Friday, April 15th, 1949.

Memorandum:

A lovely day, but slightly on the chilly side.

It is good to have Joe and Juanita here, and they spent the better part of the morning with me at Yucca, after which Juanita asked if she might walk up to Arenbourg with me, as neither she nor Joe have ever been there. She said she liked it.

A letter from Sister arrived in today's post. Joe offered to read it for me when he learned it was from her. It began in one of her most fanciful manners, spoke much about her "portrate" which convinces me she must spell ever so much as I do on occasion. She also said the children had eaten something that didn't agree with them and that they "broak" out in a rash. Joe got a great kick out of it and I hastened to tear it up in front of him to forestall any request on his part, and there would have been plenty, to regale the General with it. Her falseness and stupidity readily lends her correspondence much material for hilarity, but I prefer to share such items with you only.

This afternoon I mentioned to Joe how rampant Sister is about getting the white vases and casually remarked that I hoped he locked them up in some safe place when they were removed from the library. He said he had put them on the bottom shelf of the armoire in the telephone room and knew they would be safe there. We passed by the place and I was entranced to discover they were secure. The hilarious part about their security lay in the fact that that particular armoire had never been locked, and because its doors were standing ajar last week end, - or a couple of weeks ago, they must have escaped Sister's prying eyes, for she concentrated on the armoires that were locked and passed that particular one with only a glance since it was open.

I know you have enjoyed this week's Easter issue of Life, with the lovely colored reproductions of the medieval paintings. I haven't had an opportunity to more than hastily glance at them, but immediately on folding up tonight, I am taking them to bed with me for more leisurely enjoyment. There is a parallel between our little chat and a succession of these lovely reproductions, just as I am entranced when I think of Anne's progress from her library to her conservatory.

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At supper tonight I saw J. H. for the first time today. He was in a gay mood but afterward wanted to tell me something in another vein. He said he had talked with Dr. Eleanor this afternoon and that she had told me Mr. Bachelier had been out of his mind for the past few days. J. H. said he gathered from what the doctor said that it would be unlikely he would regain his former mental balance.

J. H. said that Mr. Bachelier had sold Mr. Sutton a piece of his patchitoches property a week or so ago. The price involved was five thousand dollars, which J. H. thought fair both to Mr. Bachelier and Mr. Sutton. Poor little man, so all alone at such a time in spite of his many good friends.

I have resumed reading "Big Democracy", the account of the functioning of the Department of Agriculture, throughout its vast net work of Agencies and Sections. It is an interesting book but clumsily phrased. I did not finish "Black Boy", finding the autobiography of Richard a little too depressing in its continuous stressing of the sad and sordid sides of life. I have no doubt they are all true, with a heap of humor which doesn't appear, but I have craved on the fate of the sewing machine girl in the past, and I need not elaborate upon her counter part in "Black Boy".

The enclosure speaks for itself. I did not get an opportunity to read the S. S. Trentiss article as yet. I am glad to see Madam Moore profited by her earlier experience when she was writing The Old Natchez Scrapbook and is having the current series copyrighted. This must be from the Natchez Times, whatever that paper may be. I shall write to that paper and ask them to send the other articles which have appeared. Either my secretary was getting restless and skipped something or else poor Mrs. Brandon cut off the final paragraphs of the piece. In this article appear two foibles, the product respectively of Miss Myra in one instance and Mrs. Moore in the other that annoyed me from the first I heard of them, and that has been years ago. First off, I object to Miss Myra's inclination to call the place D'Evereux instead of Devereux. Miss Myra owns the place and can call it anything she pleases, naturally. But merely because she is interested in various aspects of the French countryside scarcely provides her with sufficient reason, I think, to alter the name which was selected for General Devereux so as to make it fit that little chateau town in Ile de France, known as d'Evereux.

And the core quirk which always killed me was her insistence on calling any small balcony on an ante bellum house a "Romeo and Juliet" balcony. What the lady can possibly have in mind, I never could figure out, although I suspect sometime in her romantic girlhood, she must have seen a picture of Mr. Shakespeare's pet characters doing their act on some sort of a balcony and whenever she sees any kind of an architectural feature suggesting such a thing, it automatically becomes a Romeo and Juliet balcony.

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Memorandum: New Orleans, Louisiana, Sunday, April 17th, 1949.

It has been a lovely aster week end in Louisiana, and I am hoping as much may be said for New York.

What made the Melrose one so nice was the elegant letter in Saturday's post, guaranteeing many an emotion of happiness and gratitude the least of my pleasures stemmed from the knowledge that you had received the albums of Strauss and Lehar, for I know they will provide an infinite amount of joy, not only at the moment but in the days, those to come, which you couched so delightfully.

Everything here ran along as smooth as silk, but the social pattern turned out quite differently than had been anticipated.

The General and his lady arrived between 10 and 11 on Friday night. Between 5 and 6 next morning, a telephone came from Baton Rouge. It was from the wife of the General's best friend, saying her husband had been planning to go hunting on Saturday, and after getting up about dawn, remarked that he wasn't feel very well. He sat down rather heavily in a chair and when she walked over to him, discovered he had expired. She wanted the General to come to assist at the funeral, which will be held either in the Arlington cemetery at Washington or in the St. Francisville graveyard in Feliciana. I believe the man's name was Stewart.

And so the General's week end at Melrose came to an abrupt termination before it really got well started. The Joe Benrys, however, lingered on until Sunday morning, when Joe, Juanita and I had breakfast together, after which they left for Beaumont. In spite of the limitations on his time, the General was able to find an hour to come over to Yucca to commune a bit. We touched on both local and national matters, and I am always glad to have his opinion of policies relating to the armed forces. I remember how distinctly he pointed out two or three years ago that the proposed law for unification of the three armed force branches was worse than worthless, and especially was I reminded of this during the past week when the heads of the Army and the Air forces testified before Congressional committees to the same effect, after the lapse of two or three years has proven the General to have been right in his estimate of the time the legislation was pending.

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I dined with J. H. and Celeste, with turkey as the piece of resistance. Fortunately they dine early, for Mrs. Rand had passed this way around 10 o'clock, asking me to dine at the camp with them, where Dr. Rand was preparing barbecued turkey for 2 o'clock dinner. I tried, but quite unsuccessfully, to resist temptation at both boards. At the moment, however, I am perfectly persuaded that I shall not even want to look at food for a solid week.

I am so appreciative of your kindness in passing along the two titles of the Erskine Memoires, and on reading your letter, I digressed long enough to jot down both names in a letter to old Xenophon.

And may I congratulate you on having found the "Genet-Campan" letter in the Vigee-Lebrun Memoires so readily. How wonderful it is that we have such mutual friends, and I must confess to you I am sometimes a little surprised at myself for finding in some of these 17th and 18th century acquaintances a certain vividness of personality that really makes the printed personalities seem ever so much more interesting, human and alive than many a soul I have encountered in the contemporary world.

In Friday's post came the Talking Book edition of "Andrew Jackson, Portrait of a President" by M. James. In the past three days, I have found time to read but a single page, but that is sufficient to persuade me that it is exactly the type of biography I like, with much research carefully tossed in to the picture in a subtle and casual manner. In reading but a single page, I immediately discovered I wanted the author to be more elaborate with his data, as when, in speaking of Mr. Jackson's stable at the Hermitage, he remarks that the General had sent one of his prize horses as a gift "to one of the Butlers down in Mississippi". In returning North from the Battle of New Orleans, General Jackson had stopped off for the night at "The Cottage", where his friend, Thomas Butler, was living, and there were the Ormond Butlers at Ormond plantation a few miles above New Orleans, but since both of these places are in Louisiana, it must have been another member of the family, and as the gift was made, I gather, some time prior to 1822 when the book opens, there weren't any Butlers at Laurel Hill, and so I find myself impelled to drop a line to Dr. Pierce or Miss Louise, or both.

Mrs. Rand told me she had been to spend a morning at Briarwood with Caroline on Wednesday and found her looking unusually frail. She is bringing her to spend a few days at the camp as soon as the iris are done doing. As both Caroline and little Miss Alberta get along nicely together, I shall write each of them a duplicate letter, suggesting they head out for Malrose at about the same moment. --Today's white pilgrims were on the dull-ish side, the colored friends from Little River on the gay. So runs out the Easter week end and I so much hope yours has been happy, too....

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Monday, April 18th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The enclosed funny pictures speak for themselves, what with the notations appearing on the backs.

You probably recognize the back drop in the one Mr. Gage to feel and I appeared. For years it was called the Gertrude Roberts and Mr. Smith cabin until that lady departed for Asheville. After that it became known as Dr. Miller's. It is said to be the oldest known cabin in the South West. As soon as the logs were felled, they were put together without trimming or squaring them, suggesting an urgency of need for shelter. Mud was chinked between the logs where- ever they didn't fit tight. My guess is that this building was fashioned for some very early settler in the region, probably shortly after the fort at "atchitoches" had been established in the early 1700's.

In the lower right hand corner of the same snapshot, you may be able to detect the old mill stone, used as a stepping stone for the cabin. In the vast Yucca plantation barn, which J. H. took down in the early 1920's, there were two grist mills, among other things in an edifice of sufficient dimensions to house all the animals and equipment on the place. This stone is from one of those two mills. You may recall that there were three buildings in the original colonial layout, facing Red River, - Yucca plantation home, the African House in the middle, and the great barn to the East, - all in a straight line and facing South. Isn't it a pity the great structure was willfully destroyed.

The snapshots came in today's post, together with a lovely card and a cow hide belt, with splendid arabesques tooled from the silver buckle to the silver tipped opposite end. When they were here in March Mr. Gage showed me one he was wearing, made by some artist in the Austin area, and today's package appears to be by the same artist, but a little more handsomely fashioned.

I still cannot accustom myself to their prolonged silences, broken only by their lovely gifts. There was certainly no Emily Post dictum requiring them to drop me a line, following the day they spent with me a month or so ago, and yet I must confess I rather did expect one. Somewhere or other there must be a touch of old "atchez in their veins, the Bluff City where no one, except Mrs. Brandon, appears to know how to push a pen. I to recall the old "atchez in their veins, the Bluff City where no one, except Mrs. Brandon, appears to know how to push a pen.

Last night, the Weather Man promised us rain for today, but it remained blue and gold all day. The Arenbourg children could stand a little sprinkle but I'm quite sure all the planters, busy as bees at getting cotton seed into the ground, are pulling in the opposite direction.

Last October, when cotton hulls were being ginned away from the lint, I had a couple of loads carried to Ardenbourg where I had it dumped by the Alphonse Gate where the Metoyer tractor and truck would pulverise it by daily trips through the stuff. Now the stuff is as fine as Lady Esther claims her face powder to be, and I toated several bushels of the stuff and spread it thick about the feet of the Natal Bay magnolias. There is a acid in the stuff, mild but effective, which will provide an element in their diet on which they will thrive, and the covering will also tend to retain the evening dews and damps that ought to provide drinking water for the children during the dry days of summer. I am glad to report that these new grandifloras are putting out little new leaves, so I take it they are making an effort to survive, and please join me in "holding the thought they may be successful."

Mrs. R. B. Williams came down from town to pay me a little visit this morning. She told me of seeing Joe Henry at a party in town on Saturday night, and of the kind things he had had to say about me. She brought me a box of fresh strawberries which seem to be in their prime just now. She spoke of Double Muscadine and said she enjoyed it but was disappointed when the book closed without ever helping the reader to determine who actually did the murdering, around which the whole tale revolves.

I wanted to drop Mr. Pachelier a little line on Easter, but thought I would do better to inquire at the hospital first to see if he was better. I telephoned this afternoon and was told that he has quite a parcel of letters that haven't been opened and that his mind hasn't as yet returned to clarity. Poor little man, I'm afraid his sojourn in this world may be limited.

There were half a dozen points in your last letter I wanted to touch on which I haven't as yet. It was only after reading your review of certain items in the Carmolite volume that it occurred to me that Mary Dagget Lake must be the same "ort Worth lady with whom I correspond. I wrote her last night, asking her to mention Mrs. Weaver in her next letter, and so there may be something from that quarter that you will care to paste in the volume, should she come fort with a letter touching the lady in question.

Celeste spent the entire afternoon, laboring with four sturdy hands at polishing up the lower flower of the big house, and it looks as new-wrought as anything you could imagine. One cow to get the cow out of the bog and six to polish him off.....

Tuesday, April 19th, 1949.

Memorandum: I am particularly struck by the fact that none of the girls of the A. A. P. would answer me to this effect, for each one would claim that she was particular to have the trick of the "woman's" hand. It is better to be born lucky than rich, so 'tis said, and I believed it this afternoon when whailing away with my weed cutter at Arenbourg.

My weed knife, not unlike a golf stick, save for the long flat knife at right angles at the end, struck a whiskey bottle someone must have tossed over the fence one blurred Saturday night. A splinter of the glass flew slap in my face, imbedding itself about a half inch below the center of my left eye. Blood spattered forth in an imposing gush, trickling down my face and be-spattering my shirt. But I had no difficulty in extracting the splinter, and although the bleeding continued for a little, it didn't bother me any, and an hour later, after I had scrubbed up, no one could even detect the spot where the thing struck me, and the only evidence I had to show was a somewhat messy looking shirt and mild consternation on Uncle d'Or's part, for he had passed about the time the thing happened and from all the gore, thought I must have been kicked by a mule, - or at least that is the way he expressed himself.

I got to laughing just before Uncle d'Or came along, for I recalled Sister's big to-do about having to go to two hospitals, although she never did get further than the outside door. Under existing circumstances, I figured I might at least make the Melrose Clinic by the time Dr. Knipmayer got there on Thursday.

I just got around to read the enclosed card today, although it seems to have been here for some time. I had not heard of the presence of James Monroe as a pivotal personality in the tragic death of Alexander Hamilton before. Come to think of it, I guess I never have read a good biography of this unique individual although since no picture of the Revolutionary and Federalist period can very well be presented without him figuring prominently in it, I guess my knowledge of him is more because he was "among those present" than anything else.

One or twice I have read estimates by contemporary authors of the various categories into which the dozens of important people of the Revolution should be placed. All of them that

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I have glanced over agree that there were four people on whom the foundations rested and without any one of whom the success of the evolution would have been improbable. The four are Washington, Adams, Jefferson and Franklin, - in ascending importance, if a y gradations are thinkable.

I am perfectly sure that none of the girls of the D. A. R. would subscribe to this group, for each one would think her own particular Grandpa turned the trick, but never having put much stock in what those ladies thought, I certainly wouldn't be interested in hearing what their opinions might be

The enclosure for la Moore is striking for its friendly but brevity, being the shortest on record from that pen. I wrote her, congratulating her on her new series of articles last week end, and about today or tomorrow, she will have received it.

Now that she has an illustrator, - I assume she has, - she ought to do a series of allied articles when the present one is completed. It should begin with Montehello, Windsor, Sunnyside, Hurricane Hall, Egypt, Antua and so on, under the general title of "Lost Plantations of Old Natchez", or some such. The illustrator could make sketches of the remains and columns and surrounding verdure, and each article might turn out to be quite appealing. I am not, however, recommending such an idea -- or even mentioning it, -- at the moment, at least. It will be time enough when she has completed the present series, which, if she covers one house weekly, should require about three years.

And the thought strikes me as I write this paragraph that little Miss Carolina Ormon lived to see the day she regretted calling her floral opus, "Wild Flowers of Louisiana", for some title embracing a larger area would have sold the book in larger quantities, since Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, South Carolina and so on might well have been brought within the Dorman orbit. And by the same token, perhaps Martha Robinson might do better to spread her Louisiana Landmarks foundation so as to stride both banks of the Mississippi, for surely the river counties of Mississippi ought to have as much material for her activities as the Louisiana side. But perhaps such wide coverage might prove an embarrassment of riches, - and poverty. Today's pilgrims included Miss Murphy, a friend, from Derry, and some other Parish people, plus a couple of bags who hailed from I know not where, and one Mrs. Scott of 142 Street, whose husband seems to be a writer, but as usual, my black friends supplied the most genuine pleasure, and what with cotton being planted just beyond the bamboo hedge of the white garden, and the tractor drivers find breezing in and out ever so easy....

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Wed.
Thursday, April 21st, 1949.

Memorandum:

Cool in the mid 60's, with a fine mist that moistened nothing but dampened everything.

We are promised "scattered" thunder showers, but the only thing they will accomplish, I reckon, is knocking out radio reception, but as I can think of no pet programs, I shall leave the thing alone and see if I can get caught up on a little reading.

The enclosure somehow reflects a little more human side of the correspondent than usual. Only once before do I recall anything just like it. It seems to me I sense an element of loneliness not unlike a similar sensation I experience whenever I think of poor little Mr. Bachelier.

I saw Celeste at the side gate this morning between 7 and 7:30, and we chatted for a few moments before she continued on her way to the big house where her polishing apparently continues in anticipation of Sunday's party. Our relations continue just as pleasant as ever but I make it a point not to visit the big house during present operations. After all, everybody gave me free rein when I was thus engaged last November, and it seems but fair for me to accord the same courtesy now that the shoe is on the other foot. The place really looks spick and span and so bereft of any of the atmosphere it possessed during the Adam's life that one would scarcely recognize it as having been her abode.

At supper tonight, after J. A. had left, Dan, a little high, started razzing some of the people scheduled to be here on Sunday, explaining in preface, which will give Celeste great joy, when I tell her on the morrow, that he will not be here, - txx. (But I guess I had better break the sentence before it goes Froust on us and covers a couple of pages without a period).

Dan said that he thought among other guests on the list would be Mr. and Mrs. Herman Taylor of Natchitoches, wealthy local Coca-Cola people. He said the Taylors were entertaining one night in their swanky home, recently done over from top to bottom by interior decorators from Shreveport, and during the evening someone proposed a game that required someone to select a number at random, - taking the same from the page of a book wherever it chanced to be opened. But the game fell flat before it got going, for search as the hosts and guests might, not a single book could be found in the entire establishment. It was Mr. Taylor who refused to vote in favor of the Parish Medical Center.

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explaining that the only people who would get any benefit out of it would be "the niggers".

I have no doubt that Dan was over-stating the case a little in citing these people as typical of those who will be here Sunday, since it seems to be a state wide organization, and surely everyone can't be so rich and so thick as the Taylors.

In spite of the pin-point mist today, cotton planting went forward and after the tractors had been put away and deep night had settled down on Kane River, one of my negro friends called on me to commune a bit, ostensibly to ask advice, but really, I think, with more of a view to tell his problem to someone. The remarkable thing about it is that the story is almost identical with another that came from quite a different quarter more than a year ago. It is a case of the wife being jealous primarily, although the rancor in the husband's heart is the fact that the wife married him under false pretenses, since she had given him to understand that she could read and write, although ten years after they set up house keeping, he discovered that in reality she could do neither. And did I, in spite of the fact they have four children, think that was sufficient grounds for separation. I didn't. But I hastened to add that if the lady had grounds for jealousy, that ought to be good grounds for doing something or other, and that if she, - or both she and he, after a ten year go at it, decided they couldn't make it any longer together, I thought that was the best grounds in the world for separation, assuming the children could be provided for, since, if supported financially by some other members of the family with money provided by the father, probably any home would be better for them than one in which flying pots and pans were the order of the day.

When the man left, he was feeling ever so much happier, first because I had provided "the third ear", and secondly because he had relaxed a little on a glass of the distasteful Sauterne (dry) which the Winks had brought a couple of weeks ago.

At Arenbourg, I was delighted to find a lovely red amarillis (with a "Y") which had suddenly come into flower on the earthen floor of the gallery of the old Peter Metoyer house where it is bound to have been dropped last year, and under the inordinate dryness of last season, somehow took hold and suddenly came into full bloom today, defying all the laws of Nature by sheer survival. I shall remove the flower tomorrow, and when the next rain comes along, shall move it to the richest soil on the place. It really ought to do wonders under such favorable conditions, although, just to be contrary, it will probably perish on the unexpected fatness of the food. The birthday children are looking alright, and one of them appears to be making up its mind to put out new leaves. Let's both continue "to hold the thought"....

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Really Thursday, April 21st, 1949.

Memorandum:

I am sure I dated yesterday's Memor a day ahead, which just goes to show something or other.

Today has been perfectly grand, what with two good showers, strung together with heavy mists and the temperature high withal. If the Arenbourg children don't thrive in this kind of a set-up, they certainly would be more silly and less cooperative than I think.

That much cited "chicken on a hot griddle" had nothing on me, so far as being on the jump today. A shower during the night made cotton planting impossible this morning and so it gave Peter a chance to plough the weeds out of the drive at Arenbourg, and I liked watching that operation. The newly planted persimmons are now coming into full leave, which I enjoyed examining, and the gnagling mimosa appear to be all set to wander off in a half dozen directions all at the same time.

Back at Melrose I shaped up some of the Chinese magnolias many of whose larger branches were frost bitten by last winter's freeze. This gave me an opportunity to keep an eye on the front gate so I wouldn't miss Dr. Knipmayer. He gave me another typhoid shot and we canvassed Parish doings over a glass of wine.

He told me Kane River has claim its first victim of the season, a white man of 40, who was drowned hard by the shore where little Lestan used to walk under the trees, Blackstone uncracked, under his arm. The man was in a small speedboat at whose engine he was working as the boat was in motion. The boat apparently veered toward the shore, striking a stump and pitching the man out. The river was placid and the man could swim, but somehow he never did come to the surface.

Dr. K. also reported that he had heard indirectly that Mr. Bachelier was no longer at the Natchitoches and was exceedingly frail. At supper J. A. told me the lady doctor had told him Mr. Bachelier had been taken to Pineville, - the city across Red River from Alexandria where a State mental institution is situated. According to J. A. it became evident to the Natchitoches Hospital authorities that Mr. Bachelier should be removed to Pineville after he refused to talk anymore. J. A. said he had always supposed that ability to keep silent was a sign of good sense, but he must have been mistaken.

Everyone is speculating on how much property Mr. B. has

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and what disposition will be made of it. I believe he has a niece or a nephew in Nantes to whom Mr. Bachelier gave his portion of the family inheritance in France some years ago. Everyone seems to be under the impression he may have mentioned me in his will, guess ranging all the way from his entire holdings in Louisiana to a token of his esteem as expressed by his old papers, etc. Personally, I doubt if he has much property and my interest in the poor little old man rather than in his possessions seems to worry some people.

But as life ebbs in the human section, it flows mightily in the feline department. My little gray cat, too long an expectant mother, at last established her rendezvous with the old stork. As she has always been a "home body", never seeming to budge from my front gallery, except to climb a pillar to examine an unlikely place for arranging her layette in the attic above, it came as a distinct surprise when she finally cradled her offspring not in my house at all, but on the top of a pillar supporting Celeste's front gallery. You certainly can't beat a cat for originality in such matters.

At one o'clock this afternoon, J. H. sent me three men to ask if I wanted them to assist me in a y domestic chores. I did. And so, after moving all the furniture out on the front and back galleries, I set Andy to washing windows, Sam Brown to rubbing down the ceilings and walls, and Will Rogers to repairing a half a dozen things, putting a new lock on the living room door, repairing a couple of end tables and what not. Then the floors were scrubbed and re-scrubbed and all the furniture waxed and polished, the brass fenders and brass apdrons set to gleaming and so on and so forth.

In the midst of it, a delegation from Little River school came to invite me to Field Day in town tomorrow, saying that there would be a fine picnic at the Trade School and perhaps I would make a little talk in behalf of their school. I declined the invitation but rounded up my typewriter on the back gallery amidst the confusion of furniture and cleaning and knocked off a little speech for one of the boys to read in my behalf. Everybody seemed entranced over that, --which isn't for the material in the speech but primarily because there will be a paper to be read, all in type, which for some reason is very, very important.

After supper, and about first dark, Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Williams dropped in to see me. We had a pleasant little chat and so today has played out. I am holding the thought the drizzle may continue tomorrow so all thirsts on Arenbourg may be assuaged before the prolonged days of sunshine begin....

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Friday, April 22nd, 1949:

Memorandum:

From 8 o'clock this morning until 4 this afternoon it rained gently but steadily, and I liked it. The thermometer remained high, too, which also was good for outside, (which must look odd, written as a single word).

I got soaked but once and that was at Arenbourg where rain never seems to bother me, so entranced am I when I know it is bringing all kinds of nice growth to our little friends.

I slept but fitfully last night, what with my arm being a little sore, and as my secretary was in town today, I thought I would attempt the unheard of and try to grab off a cat-nap at noon. But on the plantation where nothing ever happens, that trick is easier attempted than accomplished, and after the fifth person had tapped on my door, I gave up the whole business as being silly and entirely out of order. But tonight I reckon I'll "hoe two rows at a time".

Tapper No. 5, as a matter of fact, was Celeste, who seems as busy as a bee in a tar bucket, ~~am~~ making super-fine preparations in town for the fine banquet her Society is giving on Saturday or Sunday or when ever, and delighted to be further encumbered by having to ask me from which magnolia trees she would like to best to pick branches for decorations, etc.

father casually she asked me if I proposed to wear a black suit on Sunday evening for her local garden party. But ever so definitely I responded in the negative, for kaki I am accustomed to wear seven days a week and I shall wear it on Sunday next, reserving a business suit to pull on if and when, which I hope will be never, I have to go to some silly garden party in town.

What with the rain knocking off the tractor drivers from
their farming, my barber came to cut my hair this afternoon, (inter up
you, (interjection)... And so Beau Mack placed my chair on the front gallery
also I could survey the honeysuckle in full flower on the fence
beyond. Ther terminal Barger hops have nothing on my front
gallery, for as Beau Clipped, I could observe a dozen
humming birds gathering necktar, or whatever they gather, from
the big old festoons of blossoms. Beau counted 7 different

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types within the space of ten minutes, and while I couldn't distinguish their coloring from such a distance, I could follow their doings readily enough. Beau almost took off my entire perruque with one big slash when an aggressive green bird finally made up its mind that a lovely ruby throated one had sampled quite enough of the honey, and finally drove the latter slap out of the picture.

I have heard it said that if one ties a test tube, filled with sweetened water somewhere easily accessible to humming birds, they will devote themselves to it unceasingly until all the contents of the tube has been absorbed. The next time I am in town, I think I shall see if I can't find a glass holder of the sort and suspend the thing on my gallery hard by the noysuckle and see what happens, for it will be early in July before the butterfly lilies will have unburdened their treasure of sweetness, and while I shall then sit quietly in their neighborhood and observe the doings of our little friends, still I am impatient to cultivate their intimacy in April so that by the time July opens up its oven, we may be old, old friends.

I pen these lines a bit after 9, and was interrupted a few minutes back by a little river friend who passed by to tell me that he is leaving tomorrow to take a job in Shreveport and wanted to say goodbye. With no moon and a fairly heavy cloud covering to make things dark-dark outside, I marvel at the ability of these negroes to travel about the countryside, - jumping over this or that bayou and threading their way across uncertain bridges and through pecan groves and woods in pitch blackness. So often when they make up their minds to try jobs some place far afield, negroes tend to merely evaporate from the local scene, and eventually to return in the same unceremonious fashion. But the present youth appears to have taken another method, and as we are old friends, I am glad he confided his departure to me.

In last night's memo, I think I mentioned the name of Will Rogers, son of Mrs. Cheney, a negro coming from the Little River region. Will is about 40 with a family of 6 or 8 children, I suppose, and lives in a cabin next to Clemence. He is one of those remarkably gifted individuals who appears capable of accomplishing anything in mechanics or carpentry he bumps into. Yesterday, for example, he put some new glass in the door of my living room, adjusted the automatic heater in my bath, the like of which he had never seen before, repaired a sofa and reproduced a rung in a little end table, amatching a second one, and with such delicacy that when he was finished, one would scarcely be able to tell which was the original. I might add that a couple of months ago I gave him a pair of shoes to be re-soled, and I haven't seen them yet. He mentioned them yesterday, saying he required a particular size nail to do the job correctly and that if I didn't need the shoes immediately he would continue to hold them until he could do them right. And when they come back, I have no doubt they will look as though they had just been created.

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Sunday, 24th, 1949

Memorandum:

Full summer and the fifty pieces of one yard length of string I hung on my cistern this morning were gone before noon, which just goes to prove that the orioles certainly don't take off on the Sabbath when the housing shortage is at full tide.

I has been a busy day, but ever so pleasant, with much sun and humidity and heat, and too much talk during the afternoon party whose guests numbered somewhere between 50 and a hundred, I guess.

Fortunately Mrs. Sutton and her son arrived before the others and I brought them to Yucca, - their first visit, - where we could chat a little about Mr. Bachelier. Mrs. Sutton says his heart is strong but the arteries in his brain are hardening which means his mental condition will deteriorate with the passage of time. I was especially sorry to learn that he, - remarkable man, - was conscious of periods of mental instability. During his lucid periods while at their home, before going to the asylum, he would explain to them that at the moment he felt his brain was functioning normally but urged them to be patient with him when, as he anticipated from time to time, his brain would become confused and he would, as he explained to them in advance, probably suffer from a persecution complex, and would probably accuse them of being unkind to him. Mrs. Sutton said she and her husband would have found it so much easier for themselves if their hearts had not thus been filled with especial pity at such times when the poor man sensed that for a period at least, he was likely to be out of his mind. I had never thought of such a condition before, assuming that people either went stark crazy or gradually lost their sense with even progression. This switching back and forth from sanity to insanity and back to sanity again, - and withal realizing it, is twice as pitiful, it seems to me.

I dined with J. H., Madam Regard and Mrs. Roy, Celeste's sister, from Mansura, La. Celeste was having luncheon with her Society in town. The four of us really had lots of good talk and laughter, and much of the later part of the table talk centered around the Goat castle business, what with J. H. telling me that Madam Dockery had died. For several reasons I am glad she has gone on to join Mr. Dana, not the least of the reasons being that by her removal from the scene, the squabble in the Courts over the property thus coming to an end, it may be possible, - but at great expense, to save the lovely old house, - or what is left of it. I think its one time drawing rooms are the loveliest proportioned rooms in any plantation house I know, and somehow they always reminded me of the exquisite one of Mme. de Pompadour's on the top story of the Chateau at Versailles. When Mr. Rockefeller provided funds for re-enforcing the building

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in the 1920's or 1930's, steel beams had to be introduced in these hidden away attic apartments, never seen by the public, and it was unfortunate that engineering requirements necessitate the placing of one of those steel girders slap through the middle of that delicious salon, directly over the State apartments of the King. But even that disturbing intrusion couldn't destroy the beauty of the room, and let us hope not even the ravages of the goats in the bedrooms above, have completely eliminated the beauty of the drawing rooms below at Goat Castle when restoration work gets under way.

I'll have clippings of Miss Dockery's obituary in a day or two and will send them along.

Last night I got a little chance to read from the James' account of Andre Jackson. I was enchanted when I ran across a reference to a lady of whom I had never heard before. Franny Wright was her name. I was a little sleepy while reading about her and I haven't had an opportunity to re-read the thing, but if memory serves me as well as M. Guirry, she was a lady of Scottish birth, possessed of a substantial fortune and original ideas. I believe she went to call on old Lafayette at his estate somewhere near Paris and the original call lingered on for three years or thereabouts. He is said to have been ever so fond of her and in 1824 conceived the idea of bringing her with him on his American tour but was persuaded that her presence might cause eyebrows in certain quarters to be arched, and so he took his son-in-law, Lavasseur in her stead, and it was the latter, of course, who chronicled the American journey. But to everyone's delight, including both the host and the guest, little Miss Fanny turned up at the Hermitage, outside Nashville, when Lafayette, after leaving Natchez and Memphis, stopped off for an interlude at Mr. Jackson's plantation. Later Miss Wright with a Mr. Fowler, bought a plantation "below Memphis", - which must have put it in Mississippi, I suppose, and took there a number of negroes to work the place, but under what status the negroes were, I cannot imagine, since, among other things, it seems, Miss Wright was an ardent believer in emancipation. Franny Wright, - how have we missed having heard tell of her all these years, and how in the world have biographers passed her by, - or haven't they. Franny Wright, - we

certainly must eventually get better acquainted with that lady, don't you think?

For no earthly reason I determined at 5 this morning that I would decorate Yucca for the afternoon party with flowers coming exclusively from Arenbourg, and so I was up and abroad before the sun, and tonight the air I breathe is heavy with the perfume of Milk and "lily lilies" and a pungent aroma of scarlet amaryllis, while here before me on my desk nod a fine bowl of red roses, and I like all of them extravagantly, not so much for themselves, for there are just as nice ones or perhaps better available elsewhere, but solely, as you have already guessed, because they are our Arenbourg friends, and being Arenbourg they are primarily yours.....

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Monday, April 25th, 1949.

Memorandum:

I begin this note at first dark, since 5 o'clock, rain has been coming down in buckets. If Mr. Brew, whom Mattie refers to as my "Secretary" ever makes it through this deluge, I shall be convinced all humanity descends from the fish rather than the ape.

And so the nice fat letter, arriving in this morning's post, is safely locked away in my armoire, awaiting the morrow and less humid weather.

You will find the enclosure interesting. I think the lady would have done well to have written on the back of the snapshots. If you think it worth while to make such notations from the text or if you prefer to paste them on a separate sheet or have any other wish as to what should best be done with them, please know that I shall approve but completely.

In acknowledging these items, I shall ask the lady what she knows about the Boswell papers, referred to on the radio some months back. There ought to be some association between the diarists chair and his papers, but off hand, I can't figure out of just what that permanent relationship should be.

I shall at the same time tell the lady that I contemplate a plan of the Vatican in the Connecticut hills as altogether entrancing, but that if she can't make by any stretch of her artistry, then I shall be content to have her move over Versailles' fifty thousand acres, thereby giving some concept of the Quantess layout as set down by the pencil of a lady LeNotre.

If the sentence structure in the above paragraph seems odd in one spot, charge it off to the fact that in the midst of things, proof was presented that we are, in fact, descended from fishes.

And so I have had the pleasure of a nice chat with you during the interim, and by Good Fortune, we had just reached the final page of your letter when the lights went out. Accordingly the envelope has gone back into my armoire and I shall sleep the happier because I shall be looking forward to the morrow when I shall have an opportunity to examine the enclosures.

If in the paragraph above and the following ones, the margins get extra decimations in spots, charge that feature off to the fact that the lights continue out of commission and I write in complete darkness.

There are so many things I am indebted to you for within your precious pages, and needless to say, most of all for your kindly ex-

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pressions of satisfaction in finding things of interest in my Memoranda, many of which are too lengthy and cluttered up with many a side-light which often must weigh pretty heavily on your sense of proportion and ordinary interest

Your mention of the letters appearing in the Gustine volume recalls to mind something the Madam once giggled about most heartily. I am not certain the present volume was the one in question, for I had never seen this but once prior to last year. Be that as it may, la Gustine once wanted to borrow some book of a personal nature which included letters from the Madam which she had incorporated in the volume when compiling it. She returned the said volume to the Madam with a wail, crying out in the greatest distress that many of the letters had been removed. It was the Madam herself who had taken them out, of course, thereby giving herself much satisfaction even though it nearly wrecked the Gustine number. I might add that no one either of the family or of her circle of most intimate friends, ever saw the volume you possess. The Madam showed me where she kept it secreted, however, but merely remarked that it was some doings of the Purple Lady. She never asked me to do anything especial about it in case of her death, as Lyle did in the case of his mother's letters which he left in my care and which, of course, I burned promptly as soon as I learned of his passing. In turning through the pages of your volume, you will do so with the realization that no other hands have turned those pages except the Madam's, and in view of her often express love and admiration for your sense of appreciation of things she valued, I feel there is no one in the world she would have so much wished to come into possession of the volume.

I am so glad for you that Spring is touching up the trees and shrubs in Central Park with fresh green traceries and has inclined to kiss the more daring buds of the dogwood in the Greenwood Lake region. But, please, please, don't let the increased energies that surge up with the turn of the seasons impell you to undertake added efforts in any direction. Conserve your good health for the warmer days ahead, and for the leisure, albeit fleeting, that will come with vacation time. It is so important to have a little added reserve for the full enjoyment of relaxation.

Your news from New Orleans authors interested me, for I hadn't heard of Brand's new book being out. I am glad it got such good reviews. As for Mr. Kane's part in Louisiana Landmark Foundation, I think he won't be very active, aside from the letter written to the Picayune, for ante bellum times and ante bellum houses mean less to him than carrots or beets to a grocer, for while they are merchandise in which one may make money by handling, they are nothing to be bothered with unless they can actively be made to bring in shekels to his own self-seeking purse.

I guess on the strength of yesterday's whirl, three telephone calls from Natchitoches gentry invited me to dinner this week, - all before ten o'clock this morning. Naturally I said No to each. How wonderful is contentment and apparently how puzzling to some people....

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Tuesday, April 26th, 1949.

Memorandum:

So infrequently do we mortals get a perfect balance of labor and pleasure within a 24 hour period, I must remark on how things today unrolled.

Three hours of gardening at Arenbourg at dawn, breakfast with the dark Duke of Modena who, passing Arenbourg as I was leaving, accompanied me to Yucca. Correspondence for an hour and then more labor at Arenbourg, and back to Yucca to yank off my beard before lunch. Pilgrims hastened the elimination of the whiskers and as I accompanied them to the gate, Mrs. Rand and B. Randolph arrived, inviting me to lunch with them at the camp. A visit to Clemence with them and then back to Arenbourg. Hence back to Yucca and to Melrose to receive the Chamber of Commerce, and thence to dine with them at the camp behind Fugabou's house.

I reckon I ought to be sleepy but I'm not, although I am a little tired. Somehow the nicety of balance in the day's program somehow tended to eliminate exhaustion.

The day has been cloudy, humid and in the upper 80's. But before sunrise, it was pleasantly cool on the terrace at Arenbourg, and vagrant breeze blowing up from the surface of the river. Back home, a hot bath and breakfast on the gallery, with an electric fan to keep down the temperature and to cool the cafe au lait, scramble eggs and bacon with toast, on which the dark Duke and I specialized.

I had sent Mrs. Rand and B. Randolph on ahead of me to their camp, and half an hour later, they saw me coming across the cotton patch and met me at their fence, bearing a tinkling highball for my delectation. We dined inside the camp on smoked turkey, a cold salad and much "fixin's". We took out coffee on the upper gallery, seemingly over the water of the placid lake.

J. A. and I grabbed a sandwich about 5, as the New Orleans people were expected before 6. Precisely at 6, it began drizzling, with a vast explosion of light ning off to the south. The drizzle continued for an hour while Celeste and I, alone, graced the front gallery of Melrose, night coming on, thanks to the heavy cloud covering, and no telephone call from Natchitoches to advise the Chamber of Commerce people from the Crescent City had quited their hosts in town.

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You are acquainted with the appearance of the quaint old lanterns in the front garden at Melrose. I lighted them, and they looked pretty, and somehow faintly Venetian, peeping like antiquated glow worms through the dripping foliage and the mist. Melrose was illuminated upstairs and down, and I put a 200 watt bulb in the African House, upstairs, which shed a marvelously mysterious light downward, for there is no direct light from the upper story, what with the vast projecting roof. Somehow one got the impression the eaves were radiating the light, and there was a sensation that the whole gigantic roof was somehow gradually floating skyward. The old lantern at the Yucca gate, with its white glass hand pointing heavenward, marked the way to this building and the old ship lamp on my gallery with its bright red bulb, made the pathway to brighter lights from within easy enough.

Finally, at full dark, the party arrived. There were perhaps ten or fifteen in the first group to reach the house, and perhaps 60 or 70 in the second group. We did the big house downstairs first, then through the drizzle to the African House, and thence to Yucca, and so back to the big house and the upper floor. I think it was a pretty civilized crowd of people, and I have no doubt that the somewhat strange effect of the artificial lights gleaming through the mists, giving on a landscape quite unfamiliar and rather difficult to imagination, produced a more profound effect on the guests than it would have, had they arrived before night.

In any event, everyone seemed to have a pleasant time, in spite of the fact that they must have been hungry and anxious to get on to the camp for the drinks and the food.

Between beer and barbecue, I found myself at table with a New Orleans banker, an industrialist and one of the Mayor's commissioners. They seemed ready to relax a little after a busy day, but constantly speculated on why they had never known before a place like Melrose, wonderful in its strange ante bellum atmosphere and its more remarkable people. Unquestionably the beer was better than their speculation at that advanced hour.

And so the day came to a close, and the chamber has gone back to town to sleep and to Yucca for a little chat before folding up.

Referring to the enclosure, I know you will laugh with me when you read a line from "r. Farness's letter," one that might be printed large and hung over the portals of Stanton Hall just before the next meeting of the "Pilgrimage Garden Club," just to see how many "Atherine Balfour Miller's" would fly into a flurry when their eyes caught sight of the words.

"After Melrose, Natchez proved to be an anti-climax."

Thus closeth another day, -and, let us hope, the "spring social season....."

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3566

Wednesday, April 27th, 1949.
Memorandum:

another hot, humid, cloudy day, with occasional sprinkles for the Arenbourg children, and much cannonading tonight in the North, indicating additional moisture in the offing.

But before bogging down on local doings, I want to thank you for the excerpts from the Purple Lady's pen which you so thoughtfully sent along to me. There is an odd sensation in reading from your Manhattan transcription of the lady's words about the portrait hanging above the fireplace. I glanced at it as I read your pages, and it seemed to tie up so many things so far away both in mileage and in years.

The mention of the Gustine plantations in Louisiana and Mississippi brought forth many interesting memories, too. The Wilderness plantation which Dr. Gustine owned is situated on the Pine Ridge road between Natchez and Mary Lambdin's Edgewood, at the point where a lateral road turns to go by Foster's Mound plantation, - of the "Slave Prince" fame. Miss Nellie's father purchased the Wilderness from Dr. Gustine in the 1840's, and Miss Nellie would have been born in the house, had not a mulatto slave, brought down by Levin Wailes from Maryland when he married Miss Nellie's mother, burned the place down in 1863, awakening Miss Nellie's mother, then pregnant, so she might escape in safety. The Wailes family spent the remainder of that night under trees in the garden, and the following day moved over to B. B. G.'s Washington, Miss., villa, Meade Villa, which you recall from the Sydnor book.

On the home front, as an aftermath of last night's entertainment, I discovered something on my "grapevine" that I thought both odd and interesting. While many of the visitors were at Melrose, a few of them hastened on to the camp where the supper was served. From two of the most trust worthy sources, and entirely on their own desire to confide in me, two of my negro friends who were present, told me today that one of the members of the party called the 8 or 10 servants about the camp together, and gave them quite a talk on equality, asking them why white folks didn't object to preaching to negroes in negro churches on occasion but would never listen to a preacher of color themselves, etc., etc. ad infinitum. Perhaps this man had already sampled too much beer.

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Even so, it does seem odd that a member of such a group should have felt called upon, sober or not so sober, to harangue the local colored folks on any subject, let alone racial equality. For the most part, I should say, the Melrose negroes aren't too fond of being addressed on this subject, and especially by people whom they don't know. It is interesting to report, too, that the speaker last night assured his black hearers that while he himself looked white, in reality he had some negro blood in him and therefore was a mulatto, - and a member of the colored race. Such a statement, of course, was a blunder which could not possibly have been surpassed when dished out for consumption by Melrose negroes, who, as you know, have no use on earth for mulattoes. Negroes and white people they can get along with alright on Melrose, but mulattoes are anathema to them, feeling as they do that after all, the local mulatto gentry are little better than "wolves in sheep's clothing." I don't know what this particular resident of New Orleans was trying to put over, but whatever it was, he only received silence from his audience and disdain and resentment from them after he had left, - "just picture that no account mulatto tellin' us nigger what we ought to do, - a mulatto and not as good as a real true nigger". Should you ever have occasion to refer to this matter, it might be mentioned as the "Wolf in Sheep's clothing".

This afternoon the dark Duke passed by, saying he had his wife on the little river tractor, parked behind the bamboo. He wondered if "axime, -- Dee-Dee's daughter, who has never been to my house, might see my picture of his mama, - Victoria, - so rendered by little Miss Alberta. I liked the idea, and so made an exception in the present case, for I do not let ladies of color into Yucca often. Once that bar be let down, and the husbands would have no place to free from their fretting spouses and what's worse, one lady, in searching for a husband, might stumble over a substitute on her way out, and before we knew it, we would have to begin an advice to the Colored Lovelorn, which, as an idea, sounds rather impregnated with marvelous possibilities, but one which I should care to undertake at the present busy season.

About sundown Judge Howell telephoned from town, - a friend of Joe Henry's. He, his wife and 9 or 10 year old daughter drove down from town, but declined spending the night. They returned to Natchitoches and will be back in the morning to spend the day. They seem to be lovely people, but the Madam had an element of right when she used to remark, "Was there anything more barbaric in the old days than when people used to come 'to spend the day'".

Somewhat I shall wiggle out from under them long enough to let Dr. A. give me a typhoid shot, and surely not tonight, nor probably tomorrow night, will I have to be rocked to sleep....

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Thursday, April 28th, 1949.

Memorandum: The humidity continues, with a suggestion of a sprinkle every other hour.

I am not at all proud of my day's accomplishments, - even the word makes me wince a little.

Back from Arenbourg before 7, I found pilgrims awaiting me. I made them wait a few minutes longer to grab a cup of coffee, and the balance of the day until now has been a hurly-burly of nothings.

I got rid of the pilgrims before Dr. Knipmayer arrived, but missed the postman, which accounts for this and yesterday's Memo being cancelled at the same time.

My final typhoid shot manifested an immediate reaction, but I didn't find time to worry about it, for Judge and Mrs. Howell arrived at the front gate just as Dr. K. left. They were here for dinner and remained until nearly 5. I gave them the name of Magnolia Inn as a pleasant stopping place, but mentioned none of my friends in the Bluff City, for I am sure the latter must have had their fill of pilgrims for one season, and as the Judge speaks slowly and his wife scarcely any, I felt the exhausted hostesses of Natchez might be happier and more rested if the Howells passed slap by.

Since last Saturday, J. H. says that Dan has been "on vacation", meaning on a prolonged bat. I hope the fine business he started in town doesn't go to the wall, what with his new house just about completed, - it is so pleasant thinking of him establishing himself there.

In the gossip department, a half dozen tales are going the rounds about Mr. Bachelier's will, of which everybody seems to know all, and some are already disposing of the estate while the poor little man still lives. One story has it he made his will and registered it in New Orleans 20 years ago. Mr. Sutton who passed this way the other night, told me that Father Becker, the outrageous Cloutierville priest, is named executor in Mr. Bachelier's will, - which seems most unlikely to me since Mr. B. always confided to me that he thought Father Becker a thorough-going bag. Mr. Sutton added that those mentioned in the will realized that it was the testator's desire that I should appear in it and that they have asked Father Becker to apportion something to me, and if he doesn't the three people mentioned in the document will contribute something from their shares in my favor, as they all feel Mr. Bachelier

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would have wished them to do so. This, of course, pre-
supposes that the will naming Father Becker must be extant
and that the contents of the will are known, since I am not
mentioned but the three people who are named are aware
of it. That seems odd, too.

Then there is a other version that a short time before
his illness, - sometime during the past year, Mr. Bachelier
made a new will, naming me for the larger share of his property.
All who knew him well, and the few who knew him intimately,
like the lady doctor, were always telling me how unusually
fond he was of me. He did mention to me at one time last
May that he had just been to town to take care of some legal
matters, and I gathered from what he said, that he had been
attending to a will, although naturally I made no reference
to that point.

If there are three wills, or were three, the people
mentioned in the second might be glad if the third one had
never been penned, and there is no telling but what the Courts
in the end might probate the first one and eliminate the second.
Be that as it may, I am hoping some miracle may bring him back
to his good mind, and if such a thing should happen, he would
have a prospect to live to be a hundred, I should imagine, if
he could be persuaded to eat.

I think Grandpere Augustin was so smart on reach the age
of 40 to divide up his property among his children and so avoid
all the pulling and hauling that somehow inevitably seems to
attend the settlement of the vast majority of estates.

A sample of Father Becker's chicanery is illustrated in
half a dozen instances like the following: In both
spiritual and mundane matters, he was adviser to Miss Sally's
and sister-in-law, born Hertzog. Miss Fanny was possessed of
extensive plantation holdings, and accepted this rascal's
recommendation that she let a Mr. Lecase operate the place
for her one year. Father didn't explain that he was a silent
partner of Mr. Lecase. When the season was over, Miss Fanny is
said to have received as her share of the plantation's earnings
175 bales of hay, while Father Becker and Mr. Lecase divided
between them about \$120,000.00 in profits on cotton, lumber,
etc.

Surely Mr. Bachelier who knew of such doings, would
scarcely name such a charlatan as his executor.
It is pleasant to have a little line from Laurel Hill, and
one or two points regarding the Butler genealogy is valuable,
since probably few members of the family but Dr. Pierce
would know of them.

on Jan 28 of 1944, I received a letter from Mr. Bachelier
and it was a very pleasant surprise to find that he was
still alive and well. He was 85 years old and had been
suffering from a long illness. He was very weak and
could not get out of bed. He was very lonely and
wanted to see me. I was very glad to hear of him
and I was very sorry to hear of his illness. I was
very glad to hear that he was still alive and well.
I was very sorry to hear of his illness. I was
very glad to hear that he was still alive and well.

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Friday, April 29th, 1949.
Memorandum:
To hand your elegant letter of Monday, and a million thanks
for it, - it primarily, and for the transcription of the Dockery
death which I did not read but set aside until the morrow.

Aside from that particular news item, I had heard nothing, and
sincerely appreciate your kindness in sending me the news about
the death of Captain Green whom I had the good fortune to spend
some time with on board her boat on the Mississippi along about
1940 or 1941. She was a remarkable character, and I must
go into some detail regarding the impression she made on me at
a subsequent sitting.

I am so pleased you are enjoying the Caromilite book. It is
interesting that she mentions and you pass along the statement she
made regarding the place of her birth. Up until a few years ago,
she assumed it was in Ascension Parish, but later it turned out
that a division of the Scattery Plantation fell both in Ascension
and Assumption parishes, and that in reality, she was born in the
latter, and so it goes on to her tombstone.

He certainly had a happy turn of phrase in expressing the
incomparable relation ship which once in ever so long a time somehow
sets a seal of satisfaction on the hearts of two people, old in
mutual sentiments if new in acquaintance. I liked the way she
said it, and I shall always remember what you added.

And speaking of great ladies, did it come to your attention
that the forth coming Mercury Magazine, - assume the June issue,
but it could be the May one, if that isn't out, - is to carry an
article entitled, "The First Lady of the World". Of course you have
already guessed the identity of Mrs. M. D. R., and I know both of us
will relish every line of it, but I more than you since I chance to
know The Second.

I am so glad you mentioned our old friend "S. B. Johnston", as
the Madam always referred to her. I have set aside my copy of
life to go into the matter when, - if it, - I get caught up
with regular correspondence, and can hang on to the set of the pants
of my "Secretary" long enough to do into the printed page a bit.
It is interesting to know the old girl is still 85. If I
remember correctly, she was about 4 at age during that hot
summer of 1944 when, as Ora pointed out in his last note, the
bath tub was filled to over-flowing with ivy, and the "adam and I
were itching to stumble over a little alligator to insert among the leaves,

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on the assumption that the old girl possibly bathed with the tub full of the ivy and the little animal might persuade her to get a move on in one direction or another, since she never did seem able to get under full sail until after 5 o'clock in the afternoon, although it is true she did take off her beard by 11 o'clock each morning, scaring the daylights out of poor little old Aurelia when the latter once inadvertently stepped into the bathroom while "S. B." was working her old fashioned straight edged instrument with abandon.

I hope I may get around to read the article about Morgan the Great, too. His age has gone and a fair picture of the man would be doubly interesting to read, since anyone else of like proportions coming in our times will of necessity have to be of a different mold and different method.

The thermometer continues in the 80's and the humidity hasn't slackened for days, which, of course, elicits me. At this moment of 9:15, a good shower is cascading from on high and a slight thunder storm seems to be making a racket off Montgomery way.

I spent a few hours at Arenbourg this morning, but had too many people, - Uncle d'or, Bluff and so on, who came to chat a little, and thereby slowing up my efforts a little, although as I was a-drip when I pulled out, I guess the slowing down process did me no harm, - but neither did it any to many a weed that otherwise would have been slaughtered.

Our birthday children are naturally holding up pretty well, although one of them appears ever so much vigorous than the other, - the one in the little circle separating Units No. 2 and No. 3. That one has several dozen tender new little leaves about 2 inches in length, which although still tightly furled, are about to unfold. The other, planted on the drive at the entrance to the circle, is also putting out a few new leaves, but they don't appear so green as the others. Heaven knows the weather is cooperating with everything in the plant world to get them established, and if the one which is being leisurely doesn't make up its mind soon, it probably will not survive the long hot days ahead, - although it is impossible to guess much on such points, - when "not even the angels in Heaven....."

I had a very kind letter from Mr. Pence of the Cincinnati Inquirer, enclosing a snapshot he took while here with the Editors, but I don't seem to lay hands on the latter, and the letter simply can't be sent, it sounds too many bugles, such a line for sample being: "Of course my niece and I recall our delightful day at Melrose, but while Melrose is important, people at Melrose are so much more so, ..." etc., etc. I shall eventually institute a sorting out of stuff and shall find the snapshot later. I gain my sincerest thanks for your elegant letter of Monday, guaranteeing me a perfectly enchanting week end....

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Sunday, May 1st, 1949.

The weather continues warm and humid with blue sky replacing the clouds of April.

I passed by Celeste for a few minutes between 6 and 7 this evening and got quite a kick out of her distress over the current pilgrim problem. In reality I guess it is about normal but only recently has she moved into the receiving line and already she is exhausted.

Personally I am all in favor of staying off most of those who pass this way, - the dumb bells who have no interest in anything they see or any capacity to appreciate anything only live in town. It is not in line with the run-of-the-mill existences they live in town.

What I begrudge is the time they take up, not that I would be doing anything worth while perhaps during the hour or so eaten up by each visit. But even though I were doing nothing during that interval, I should at least pass myself off as resting, and that, too, has some advantage over whirling about like a squirrel in a cage and coming out, slap where one entered. Today's batch included some middle aged Shreveport ladies whom Celeste had encountered at some meeting in town this Sunday morn, and as one of them passed herself off as a former acquaintance of "Robina's" the trick was turned, and everybody had a stupid time.

But Don and Eleanor Worsley came to see me just as the last gusts were leaving and it was pleasant to collapse for a little while with them. Dr. Eleanor gave me a few details concerning Mr. Bachelier's last days as her patient before going to the asylum. It seems Father Becker moved in on Mr. Bachelier with vigor, and I believe a new will was contrived, so that his estate will go in large measure to the Clouterville priest, - under guise of being turned over to the church, - so much to educate priests, so much for prayers to be said for Heaven knows how long, etc., etc. It is thought the estate is valued at something between twenty-five and fifty thousand dollars, and Father Becker, who already owns oil wells, cotton gins, etc., not to mention a movie adjoining his church, will be the richer for his descent on the poor little old man. Without waiting for Mr. B. to die, Father Becker has already

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removed all his papers, books and effects from the Little River plantation to the priest's house in Cloutierville, and as executor of this final will, he will undoubtedly get away with it.

To have had him as a friend has made me ever so much richer than Father Becker will ever be, in spite of the fact that he does get all the property, for possession of Mr. Bachelier's affection was mine and even Father Becker must have known that Mr. Bachelier considered him a scoundrel.

I was glad to learn that Rosalyn Aswell is going to begin a portrait of Eleanor this week. She is a good artist and being fond of her subject, I imagine she will turn out something especially nice. I think I have mentioned the portrait she did of Fanny Hurst which I think is excellent. I am sorry she never did get around to doing one of the Madams.

On leaving, the lady doctor noticed "Andrew Jackson" on my Reading Machine. She said some current medical journal has a long article about all the diseases from which "Old Hickory" suffered, with tuberculosis thrown in, the miracle being that a man thus afflicted should still have had such tremendous energy as to dominate the military and political fields so long as he did, to say nothing of his various other enterprises, - planting, horse breeding and so on.

If and when I get around to read, I concern myself momentarily with his fight with Nicholas Biddle over the Bank of the United States. What is so wonderful about that fight, it seems to me, was the fact that the President, unlike his Cabinet, Congress and his advisers far and wide, felt that private monopoly of the country's credit in the hands of private bankers, - one banker, - was wrong and ought to be correct, and although neither he nor any one else could think up a way to institute anything as good, he disdained pleas on all sides to let the thing rock along. It was definitely "throwing away an old shirt before a new one was in sight", but in spite of the urgency for some kind of a covering, he threw the old one out regardless, and as the shirt went out the window, so did the strangle hold a single private citizen have on the economic throat of the nation.

The books speaks highly of James Alexander Hamilton, son of Alexander Hamilton. I believe A. Hamilton, the father married General Schuyler's daughter, and I have often wondered what if any kin was Peter Schuyler who was buried in the graveyard at Monmouth in Watchez.

I never did find time to skip up the Arenbourg today, and I impatiently wait for tomorrow's dawn. There's a nice svelt new moon beckoning me beyond the "White Garden", but I shall resist, reserving my response for the morning star....

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Monday, May 2nd, 1949.

Memorandum:
And so poor little Mr. Bachelier died this morning.

So, in his mid-70's, ends his 45 years on Little River, - 45 years of service, saving and solitude. As for his services, they have surely lighted many a star in his crown to brighten his departure from solitude into the City of Light. Curious what tricks Fate plays, what with all his savings snatched from his dying grasp and against his wish and intention, diverted into the already over-weighted pockets of a charlatan priest. But his own character and kindness will remain more effective to many a friend and acquaintance, while the cash, acquired by such under handed means, will bring but dubious happiness, I fear, to Father Becker.

In fine, Mr. Bachelier was a good man and the world was the happier for his presence. I can think of no nobler epitaph for any man, and let those who will cast lots for Jesus clothing..

Dr. Eleanor telephoned me the news this morning, just after I had returned from Arenbourg around 8. I had discovered Mattie's children, playing by Bluff's house on Saturday, had swung a hoe and broken one of the pear trees in the drive. Naturally I was furious, and I guess that was just the time to be, since, on reaching Yucca, the message regarding my old friend came to hand, and automatically relative values got into balance again and I forgot what a vast fuss I had just made.

Thanks to the marvelous growing weather, the birthday magnolias are doing wonderfully well. Last night about 10 o'clock there was a tremendous pyro-technic display from off Shreveport way, with about three flashes to the second. I sat by the old grandfather clock, hard by the door, gazing out into the strange garden, so eerie in the constant flashes. The old clock ticks 60 times to the second, and just for fun, I fell to counting the number of explosions between ticks. Eventually a good rain added the right note to the inordinate orchestration, and I folded up my beard in contentment, glad that our little friends were getting another nice drink.

This morning I found them lookin' all new-washed and lovely, with delicate little circles of tender green leaves which had

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opened during the night

Last Winter's cold was certainly devastating on the Chinese magnolias and many of the little crepe myrtles, but more Chinese magnolias may be planted and more crepe myrtles may be added to our present stand. I must say that those crepe myrtles surviving look splendid and several of them will blossom this year, I believe, along about July. And then, too, there is always the comfort in surmising that if anything survives any great blast of either heat or cold, it is more than likely to be completely insulated against anything of the type that may recur in the future.

With the thermometer in the 80's, I have inaugurated the ice tea season, and like all hermits of childish simplicity, I look forward to the ice tea hour with vast impatience and enthusiasm. The magical hour for serving is between 9 and 10 p.m., - but exclusively. Coffee, cistern water, Coca-Cola and milk havetto suffice my thirst during the day. Only when day is done and I turn to my Reading Machine to I fortify myself with a tray of ice and a tall frosty glass, and have a go at things

Experts in tea making tell me they can make enough tea ahead to last for two or three days, but I am not that expert. I like mine fresh with each nightly sitting, and besides, I don't think I could exert enough character to ever give up reading and re-filling my glass, so long as any remained.

I usually stir up the ingredients in the late afternoon, pouring boiling water over the tea and letting it steep from 2 to 3 minutes. Then I remove the grounds and after the stuff has cooled a little, put in in the ice box until 9. I use sugar a-top the ice cubes when pouring the tea, and that's all there is to my process. If you have a better method, - or a simpler one, do be so kind as to share it with me. Old Donazetti, they say, used to get drunk on coffee, and finally went mad on over drinking the stuff, but I always thought the gossips were stretching the point a little. Still, if I keep on consu ing ice tea nightly at the same rate I have maintained for the past three nights, I certainly ought to be as high as a kite by the 4th of July.

I should have referred to the enclosure ere now, - or perhaps not taken up your time by enclosing it at all. It really is of no interest, except to show what curious people we do hear from every once in a while. There was something about the final line, - "A thing of beauty is a joy forever", that puts me in mind of la Moore's "Romeo and Juliet balconies. I have already written Kerr Keller saying "No, - not more than for a couple of hours.

If this letter arrives a day late, it will be because I may not return from tomorrow morning's funeral in time to catch the postman....

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Tuesday, May 3rd, 1949.

Memorandum:

I suppose I have often in the past referred to that poem "The Birthday of the Dauphin", whose composer I have forgotten. I thought of a couple of its lines more than once this morning in the Cloutierville Church where Father Becker said High Mass over Mr. Bachelier's bier:

"Ignorance, intolerance, superstition, hate,
As though a Demon saying Mass,
The Sacred Wafer ate,
The Men at arms comes riding to the birthday of the State...."

It has been a beautiful day but too warm and humid. Fortunately a good breeze swept through the Church which did much to make the hour more bearable, what with plenty of candles burning to make things warmer, and God apparently not understanding anything but Latin and me understanding mighty few words of that dead tongue, the whole sitting inclined toward the dull side.

I attended the funeral more as a matter of form than anything else, for long since had poor Mr. Bachelier ceased to be tormented and tried, his wishes twisted and corrupted and his mind driven further out of balance. For me he had departed when he had succumbed to all these on-slaughts and the services this morning were scarcely less than a mockery, it seemed to me.

In such a frame of mind, I suppose it was easy for me to pick flaws in everything and as easy as pie to find a striking anachronism in an ancient ceremony that could be rattled off only in sing-song Latin while, in lieu of the usual striking of the meditation bell, and electric gong blared out mightily and prolonged from time to time. I take it Dan Henry, sitting on my right, must have experienced something of the sensation, for he asked me in a whisper why they were making such a racket. I answered back in an equally subdued tone:

"It's a telephone call for you. For Heaven sake why don't you answer the darned thing."

Celeste was on my right, busy as a bee, turning the pages of some little old book backwards and forwards. The Lord knows what she was consulting, - perhaps it was a bi-lingual prayer book and she was trying to keep abreast in English of the Latin that was rattling along at a great rate.

Fortunately the breeze kept sweeping through the Church, and eventually and at endless last, the services were concluded, and I feel positive that little Mr. Bachelier, looking down at us from

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on high, must have chuckled sympathetically with me over all this hollow tom-folery.

So endeth the earthly carrier of my old philosopher friend but High "ass or no High "ass, tonight does he dwell in Paradise.

Today's post was rather heavy and inadvertently I destroyed a Saturday letter from China, arriving today. She wrote in haste, saying that she had run in to the office but for a moment on her return and wanted to dash off a little line to let me know she was back. She said she had a lovely trip, - going and coming, encountering many apple orchards in bloom in the Shenandoah Valley going, and in Illinois coming back, but that the theatre list, both afternoon and evening, was too concentrated for a person like herself, unaccustomed to attending plays twice a day, and day after day. She mentioned one in which Melvin Douglas is appearing, and two or three others, but they elude me, as I raced through the letter, what with the plantation bell already having rung, calling my "secontar" to his cotton planting.

A night or two ago, I had fairly good reception from Des Moines, and was perfectly enchanted by the response of one lady who was asked what she did before becoming a housewife in Iowa's largest city:

"I taught school," was her response, and when asked if the school was in Iowa, she replied affirmatively: - "In Gospel Swamp".

Don't you think that's a lovely name, - Gospel Swamp..... Only it seems to me it never should have been designed for Iowa but rather somewhere off in Louisiana, on some remote bayou, say between Little and Red Rivers, somewhere beyond St. Mary's on the Bayou. Gospel Swamp, - I think that is a wonderful name, and I shall probably be muttering it in my beard from now slap through ice tea time.

And speaking of Gospel Swamp, - and how often shall I roll it over and over again, - like the battle cruiser, The Royal Daffodill, - reminds me of The Song of the Swamp, or Chloë, which was once made into a marvelous record by Reisner, and long since out of print, if not re-issued. I think it is something to keep in mind for your record collection, as well as a good rendition of Rose Room, which I believe has been done several times, but I have never heard it on a record that I thought especially good. You might sample one sometime when in the Gramophone Shop or wherever. There was a splendid recording by Hilton's orchestra of Just a Gigolo, - done in the 1930's, I believe, all of which might be kept on a Desiderata list to nibble at from time to time whenever you chance to find it convenient to sample various recordings. I think there must have been a worth while record of Jealousy, too, possibly with a piano as the dominant instrument, which might be nice.

And now I am going to plunge through a shower, a few pages of A. Jackson and oceans of ice tea and so to bed....

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Wednesday, May 3rd, 1949.

Memorandum: I have just received a letter from Elizabeth Ney which I shall not be able to read at present, and so I hope you will keep it. I took the opportunity to enclose a couple of sprigs from the Arenbourg sweet olive. From the smallness of the blossoms, you will note how difficult it is to get much of a bouquet, but I am hoping against hope some little vestige of perfume will remain to give you a breath from Arenbourg.

You will also note a piece of ribbon grass from Arenbourg. Like all plants, this has about a dozen popular soubriquets, such as Pampas Grass, ribbon grass and so on, but the one I like best, I think, is Gardener's Garter. Dying down every winter, it puts up again each spring about the last of March, and is white-white. Gradually the green stripe develops and by autumn the whole leaf is green. The leaves grow about five or six feet from out of the ground, and in the two groups we have by the two gates on the Bermuda Road, about half a dozen big old plum like things develop in the fall, standing perhaps 8 or 10 feet from the ground. It seems ever so hardy and is driven out by no amount of weeds or other grass, and gradually extends its root system not unlike Johnson Grass or bamboo, but not with their devastating aggression.

Later when I have time for doing something other than holding back the weeds, I want to make a nice big circle, perhaps 8 feet in diameter, depressed at the edge and elevated in the center about a foot, outlining the circle in Giant's Beard and planting Gardener's Garter within the circle. At this season of the year, and especially in moonlight, the whiteness of the grass should produce an effect of beautifully foaming water gushing up from the earth. Every time I pass this stuff at Arenbourg, its whiteness reminds me of a similar whiteness at night one used to experience, perhaps in the 1920's or 1930's, at the Ronde-Pointe des Champs Elysees where Lalique glass, lighted from beneath, threw up jets of snow white water beneath the chestnut trees, and the whole thing was delicious. Neither circumstance nor propriety would call for such contrivances at Arenbourg, but the effect produced by this special form of vegetation ought to be equally charming, don't you think.

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There is some kind of a frolic at St. Athew's school tonight, and I was perfectly enchanted when Peter, on his way thither, stopped off to ask:

"You ain't got an old ink pencil, has you? I 'se gwint to St. Athew's and if you 'se wearin' an ink pencil in you 'se pocket, it 'sure does make you seem like you 's lookin' up."

And "ink pencil", of course, is Peter's way of saying fountain pen, and although he can neither read nor write, he finds in that gadget a decorative gadget that gives great merit to his appearance.

There was a nice little letter from Harriet Lawes today. She is with the Chicago Journal of Commerce and was among those present on March 21st. She had heard of a novel written about the "Cane River" a number of years ago, and wondered if I could help her out. Mr. Saxon's regional novel must be what she is striving for, and I shall recommend it forthwith.

Dr. Alben, representative of the U. S. Agriculture Dept., in the Southwest, and one of the country's pecan experts was here for the day. He says the pecan trees, now in full leaf, don't appear to hold much promise for a large crop. I don't think I heard so ething similar last year about this time, and I guess we never did get more than five or six hundred thousand pounds. I am reminded of the "adam" who used to declare that every year she was told there would be no cotton crop, but somehow the crop, in the end, never failed. I reckon it is about the same with the pecan trees in this area, although the crop does appear to run in cycles in some places.

As for myself, I devoted most of my time at Renbourg to the mandarin. At this season of the year, they should be putting out little clusters of white things, about the size of unground pepper. Along about late August or early September, they should fill out, each to about the size of a fat elder berry, and start turning red, which color they will retain all winter. I am delighted to note that what with the heavy dews and damps during the past month, this year's crop of potential decorative globes appears ever so promising, and I believe each bush will be quite heavily loaded. The individual plants, too, are putting out plenty of new leaves, especially those to the east and the south of the house. Those about the circle in the drive don't look very well, but I believe they are taking hold alright, even though they be laggardly about it, and in the mean time I am coaxing them along with hoe and spade to the best of my ability. I am glad the others are setting them such a splendid example.

So things go, and from the enclosure you will note that just about this hour of 10, little Miss A. must be just about arriving in Louisiana's oldest community.....

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Thursday, May 4th, 1949.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that a nice fat letter and an equally nice fat package are tucked safely away in my armoire, the former awaiting the advent of my "secontary" on the morrow, for he seems to have become lost tonight, while the latter, if I can hold out against impulse, will remain cloistered until Monday, as between this paragraph and the fore-going, I was proven wrong by the tapping of Mr. Brew, and thus I have had the pleasure of reading your grand letter, reserving a portion of the enclosure, covering little Miss Fanny Wright for tomorrow's sitting, as some frolic or other up the road will render tomorrow's reading of the balance of little Miss F.'s doings ever so much more satisfactory to me and said "secontary".

How nice to know you can glimpse the linden trees from where you write and that they are putting on their summer garments. Surely that means there cannot be any more cold snaps this season, and fine weather, sunshine or rain, if it isn't too cold, helps out much, and especially is this so when, as I gather from your paragraph on our little friend and her difficult domestic set up, who certainly deserves every break the elements may accord. Thank Heavens she has such a steadfast beacon living so close by, to whom she can turn for sympathetic understanding when everything gets out of joint.

From your account of the case, it sounds as though the arteries might be playing their devastating part, and while such tendencies are arrested in their deterioration, my guess is that in the present instance, covering such a prolonged period, the difficulty must be gradually increasing. I think that half the battle is easier if one understands in part both the cause of the trouble and the probable pattern it will follow. In the case of my old friend, the final manifestations seemed to transpire almost after the natural sorrow for those who loved him, had passed. I think these are the darkest days the girl friend will experience. A little later when the seeming inevitable has arrived, and passed, the difficulties will seem less difficult to bear, what with those which she is experiencing right now, having marked the depths below which one doesn't have to descend, but new gleams of light on another and upper level begin to appear. May those shafts of light begin to appear soon.

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How kind of you to give me the details and impressions you touched upon in regard to the Parish pictures. By all means keep them and make use of them as you please. It is so kind of you to take time out to paste and annotate them. I perhaps mentioned I sent her some butterfly liles for the conservatory and perhaps in acknowledgement of their arrival, she will tell us more about the place, - I hope, - for it does sound entrancing.

And let me say how happy I am to know about Madame Monroe's visit to Mme. de Lafayette during the Terror. Never having read her life, I know nothing about her stay in Paris during those exciting times. Her little house on Lafayette Square, opposite the White House in Washington, as I understand it, was the ultimate in select society for years and years after her husband's Presidency, - and his death. I believe she was quite a remarkable personality, and yet, for the life of me, I can't say that I have any special grounds for thinking so, except for little asides; run across in reading biographies of other people during the ante bellum period.

And yet, as I write the above lines, I realize that probably I am not thinking of "me. Monroe but Mme. Madison, and obviously I had better get those ladies straightened out in my mind, for I believe they were quite different, and Mme. Madison being a much gayer number than Mrs. Monroe. I suppose Mme. de Lafayette was a de Noailles, and that was enough during the Terror to mark her for the guillotine.

The weather continues marvelous and Arenbourg was delicious at dawn. I dragged a great armful of Milk and Wine lilies back to Yucca this morning, to send them by Dr. Knipmayer along to Miss Sally, for every first Friday is some kind of a religious business in her private chapel, and she is forever in need of flowers for decorating her altar.

Little Miss Alberta arrived a little after 9, Celeste bringing her down from town. She seems rather more full of vim and vigor than usual. You will laugh when I tell you she brought a couple of bolts to be put on a couple of doors in her room in the big house, for that house has never had anything like a lock on it.

Mrs. Rand and Mrs. Pattison came for dinner. They invited me to come over to the camp in the afternoon, but I declined, somewhat with gardeners on my hands at -elrose and some more private gardening I wanted to do at Arenbourg before day was done. Mrs. Rand brought me a bottle of Taylor's Port Wine, bottled near in Hammondsport, New York. It is obviously made from Concord grapes and is excellent. As you know the finger lake region in central new york is famous for its vineyards, and here is the proof of their quality. So much more to write, -but tomorrow....

8828

3582

Friday, May 6th, 1949.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that a neat, square package has joined the fatter one in my armoire, awaiting Monday's dawning, and that your elegant letter, together with the enclosures, reached my true hand in this morning's post.

Up to the present writing I feel very noble about having resisted my natural impulse to keep the armoire contents intact. I hope the week end will be busy so the temptation will be the less.

Today's post was rather heavy and I haven't finished it as yet. My secretary, instead of passing by this way, wandered off with one of the clerks, Teddy, to explore the new pool table across the river in the Compton saloon, and so I fell back on an assistant. I shall hold the Boswell clippings until next week, probably, since Saturday and Sunday, unless it rains, will see every mother's son on a frolic, and at the same time, I shall reserve "on the holding shelf", the balance of your splendid account of little Miss Fanny. I smiled when today's post brought little Miss Parish's paragraph account, while your report covered three pages. Never did I need any such line up to suggest comparative diligence, but by coincidence both sets of particulars arrive along side, and your own efforts in my behalf are so rich in your characteristic thoroughness and industry that they stand forth unsurpassed in their nobility.

I am so glad you told me of Mr. Rand's Chinese twist, giving me claim on the Ming dynasty. I am a little vague as to my early history of the Celestial Empire, but there was a flowering of the Arts at that period, as I recall, and what with Herr Keller's "Beauty is a joy forever" line, coming as it did through the Rand medium, one may perhaps ferret out some relationship. With Ming on my mind, however, there is no telling what the week end may bring if my barber doesn't make a round on Saturday or Sunday to do a bit of shearing, and who can tell but a pig tail might be just the thing to go with a hoop-skirt when a San Antonio delegation passes this way.

In your last but one letter, you inquire about the dwelling occupied by "A." and Celeste. It stands just to the West of the big house, - perhaps 500 feet away, and the yard to the South gives on the Montrose Road while the West side is demarked by the Bermuda Road. It is just an ordinary little half Spanish type of house, - one story, I, and not unlike any one of a million you might see scattered over the suburbs in -uens. Neither of its occupants like old houses, and my suggestion on the possibility of moving to the big house following the Madam's death brought forth a cry of horror from Celeste who wouldn't live in such a dwelling under any circumstances.

3583

I recall once when the Madam, Lyle and I were talking about houses, the Madam asked what could be done to the house next door to make it look less matchbox like. Lyle came up with an immediate answer:

"I'll tell you what, there is just one thing and only one thing to do with it if you want to make it look like something. First off, you burn it down, - and after that you would have clear sailing!"

Both Celeste and Madam Regard are immaculate house keepers, and everything in the place is spick and span, with a few nice pieces, - although the house being small, there isn't room for much, - and, to quote Lyle a second time, "there is but a single room in the house that has the vaguest suggestion of individuality or character, and that of course is the room in which J. H. sleeps, for he does stay in it long enough to give a little bit of himself to it."

Of the two plantation houses, Celeste, if she had to make a choice, would select Yucca as opposed to the big house, I believe. But neither she nor J. H. would like it, since they don't like old houses. Perhaps I have mentioned before that one day in the early 1920's, the Madam heard a great racket going on over here, and sending to J. H., inquired what it was all about. He told her quite frankly that he was beginning to tear down Yucca and that one chimney was already half way gone and the roof would follow shortly. The Madam put her foot down firm. J. H. looked at her in astonishment, quite incapable of comprehending why she should want him to hold up the wrecking crew. What's more, he told her he would build her two of the finest modern laundries in the Parish on the site of Yucca, what with the splendid chimney remaining and all. But she told him she didn't want any wash houses, for she already had one good one, but what she wanted was to save the original old mulatto residence, - and that, of course, he could understand at all. But whatever she ever wanted was never questioned, and so the chimney was put back and the roof repaired. The great plantation barn, forming the third and most easterly building of the three in the straight row facing Red River, - this house, the African House and the vast barn, - was taken down instead.

In Celeste's living room there is a small secretary, and I believe there may 4 or 5 books hidden away inside, but I have never seen one, and there are no books elsewhere in the house. Papers and magazines do not clutter up anything or lend a homey touch to a comfortable chair because any newspaper or magazine is chucked out the same day it may unsuspectingly find its way into the menage.

I remember once when J. H., always mockingly referring to us "poor folks" said to his mother that if he were rich, he would certainly live in a hotel. "In a hotel," was the Madam's quick rejoinder. "I don't understand what you're talking about. Don't you know that at Melrose we have been running a hotel from the first day we moved here."

and so J. H. reads his books at his office or sometimes in the library of the big house where things have always rocked along with a degree of nonchalance while across the fence everything is in proper order and much talk can be expended on the proper way a window should be washed or a curtain hung, with no one caring a damn. So do two houses reflect their respect

3584

Sunday, May 8th, 1949.

Memorandum:

A lovely week end, all blue and gold, with a delicious breeze from the general direction of the Gulf, with the nights heavy in si ver except in the star studded vault of Heaven and in the depths of the bamboo hedge where nightly the golden twinkle of the fire flies contend with the major plantlets above to attract the eye and delight the soul.

Saturday night was particularly lush, from where I sat in the deep shadow of my gallery, giving on the White Garden, Grenched in moonlight and heavy with the scent of the honeysuckle and Milk and Wine lilies. A cleft in the deep green of the bamboo hedge, - a velvety black rent, and three figures emerged into the full moonlight of the lawn. It was Dee-dee, his son, Attrice and his son-in-law, the Dark Duke. All day they had planted cotton on Little River and only gave up when twilight fused into moonlight. Still in their overalls, they had all three climbed aboard their tractor and driven to Melrose, heading straight for the Melrose Social Club for some cool-cool beer. But what with everyone else present wearing their "Sunday" clothes, they didn't linger, but brought an armful of icy bottles to Yucca where they found me contemplating the glory of the heavens from my shadowed cloister.

Sounds from the honkey-tonk hard by Renbourg floated down heavily filtered by the balmy air. We could hear voices of people passing on the far side of the bamboo at the far end of the garden, threading their way toward the night club across the cotton fields. Occasional a rent in the dark green hedge, and some gay young blade, probably having heard our voices, - or the cap fly off a beer bottle, would emerge from the hedge, usually a shirt or a pair of sport shoes looking startlingly white against the heavy background and the subdued boarder made by the lilies half in shade.

My big old yellow and white cat was twice as large in the moonlight, and frolicking about the lawn unceasingly, forever trying to catch up with the beetles or the glow worms, leaving little trails of spilled moonlight across the grass.

We laughed much and drank our beer slowly, and after a busy day for everyone, it was peaceful and cool and satisfying. A little after ten my companions decided they had better be getting on, and they, in turn, dissolved through the same dark green bamboo through which they had so silently entered a couple of hours earlier. Usually I try to get caught up with my reading on Saturday night, but last night I got more out of my contacts with my negro friends, the fire flies and the stars.

3585

What with it being Mother's Day, it was but natural we should attend Madam Regard's "coronation", and so little Miss Alberta, Dan and I, dined next door. Celeste and Madam Regard head out early tomorrow for Mansura, where Madam Regard will remain for a day or so, while Celeste picks up some of her kin folk and journeys on to Baton Rouge to attend a wedding of some of the Regards. In view of their absence on my natal day, the dinner was shared jointly by Madam Regard and me, and on leaving I was presented with a neatly framed picture, perhaps a foot and a half by two feet, being a very nice reproduction of "r. Audubon's Tuttle Doves, one of his nicer compositions, I think, with the birds perched on branches of chaste dogwood. I have hung it in my boudoir, in the wall space between the door and the window, giving on the white garden. Somehow it goes ever so pleasantly in the room whose other pictures are all portraits, - Victoria, Marie LeVeau, her husband, and Father and Son.

My afternoon was busy enough, what with pilgrims from Dallas, Shreveport and I don't know where, to all of whom I gave scant attention. Peter came to sit for a while. He says he would rather have been born a rat than a nigger, "cause niggers done got bad luck even befor they starts". I think Peter is getting restive to go back with my belle whose husband, Olivier, still lingers on, although from day to day it is expected he will have to return to the Army. I passed by my s this morning to leave a note for the Bands, and there learned that Peter had cut his hand last night in some kind of a scuffle at the Club. I asked him nothing about it, of course, but did offer him a couple of big bandages to dress it.

And then Amos Layton, a little River negro came to see me for a little visit. He wanted to talk about his seven children and how he hopes to give them some schooling. I had expected my regular "secentar" to show up, but he didn't. Fortunately I carry an emergency on my list, and good old Murrell passed this way to help me out a bit.

Dr. Land passed by around 3, wanting me to give him some particulars on ante bellum botanists of Mississippi and Louisiana, and we chatted for an hour or so, looking over various pictures and documents I had collected in my Yucca bookcase on kindred subjects. He wanted me to go back to the camp with him but I demurred, and then Celeste appeared, asking us to her house for coffee which he declined, as he had people waiting for him at the front gate. I had coffee at Celeste's however, which turned out to hold an invitation for me to accompany her and little Miss Alberta down to Magnolia for a little call on Miss Sally and the rest of the family. But I demurred on that one, - and so the day spun out.

I appreciate your thoughtfulness in telling me of the testimony coming out in the current Communist trial concerning 5th columnist activities in the South. Apparently the Chamber of Commerce wrinkle was a case in point, but I laugh everytime I think what a blunder the fellow made in assuring the negroes he was a mulatto, - the race the negro loathes more any anything else in this world....

3586

Monday, May 9th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Thirty million times would not suffice to tell you what a happy birthday, thanks to you, Arenbourg and I have had.

And the nicest thing of all was to be found in the lines arriving in this morning's letter. I sometimes think childhood is so overflowing with such a variety of wonderful things, - all seemingly equally miraculous, that only in maturity do we appreciate the really wonderful things when life has given us an opportunity to separate much of the childhood chaff that seemed remarkable, - and with the progression of the years, begin to sense how precious are those few things which, in the final analysis, the quality of the pure in heart seems the greatest blessing of all. I'm afraid some people stumble along through life, never sensing such a pearl of great price is close to hand, and must in the end find existence mighty dull, while others, by the grace of God, recognize the single element that makes living a joy, - and clutching tight to it, move on serenely through all the storms and calms ahead, forever secure in the realization, which I possess so abundantly, that one sympathetic soul is what makes life worth while, and once conscious of its presence, everything from that point forward is alright.

Clumsily have I expressed myself, but that doesn't matter, for knowing you as I do, I feel perfectly assured that you understand all.

At 4 o'clock this morning there came a sudden shower, - brief but intense. Within five minutes it was finished, and within 55 minutes, two packages under my arm, I was marching toward Arenbourg. I didn't even glance at a weed as I entered, but marched straight to the terrace where I had placed a little bench on Saturday, and there beneath a big old cottonwood, contemplated the beginning of a new washed dawn, the river surface silvery and silent and only my old friend, the mocking bird, hopping about and worrying me for a crumb to break the stillness.

The Metropolitan folio is lovely. I got so busy trying to recognize old acquaintances in the reproductions that my friend finally gave up trying to attract my attention and flew off without waiting to see what else was likely to be going on.

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I haven't had an opportunity to examine the text accompany each picture, but I am sure it must be excellent if it compares favorably with the reproductions which are little gems in themselves. What a delightful idea to share the glories of the Metropolitan with those who aren't able to get in frequently, and how often I shall experience the same satisfaction I used to in Manhattan when I discovered, after a few trips to Lewishon Stadium concerts, that I could get about as much out of them through the radio while resting on my downy couch at home where the hustle and bustle of people was shut out and I could absorb the excellence of the presentations without the distractions accompanying them too often on the spot.

The little Brownie seems to work as easy as pie, and what with all the films to hand, I propose to strike off a number of items at Arenbourg, Yucca and Helrose forthwith. The simplicity with which it operates suggests that it may be "fool-proof", - and such mechanical items should be thus contrived for me, for I lay no claims to the laurels of any "S. B." Johnstons when it comes to "striking a picture." It seems to have traveled perfectly, and I am keeping it in the excellent dust-proof case in which it arrived, so that when marching up and down the Bermuda Road, there will be no invading dust storms to blot out my attempts at recording the local country side. I am perfectly entranced with the whole business, and I warn you to brace yourself against resulting showers of films that are likely to result almost any time now.

As for the items in the smaller packages, I found them so timely, for I had left Yucca without coffee, and my appetite was improving with the advancing day. My old friend was silly to have flown off so prematurely, for he might have breakfasted on some of the elegant chocolate numbers that I got busy with, and if he has the same taste for chocolate as I, he wouldn't have been able to stagger by the time the sun was turning the river from silver to blue.

As for the chemise, it is elegant, and as I discovered right then and there on the terrace, it fits like a glove. I am crazy about the color and the material, the latter being ever so much more fine than I am accustomed to. For summer, I like long sleeves for items of this quality, for while in the hot season I often wear short sleeves while working, I like the long ones for receiving friends and sitting about in relaxation, for while I incline toward non-chalance and informality in my plantation clothes, I don't like to feel too undressed when I toss away my hoe in exchange for passing pilgrims.

And Arenbourg, - but that is another birthday, and other trees and plants will grace the place in more rapid abundance, thanks to the one friend who, with Arenbourg and me, makes such a happy trinity, and every day a birthday for

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3588

Tuesday, May 10th, 1949.

Memorandum:

It is so pleasant to look forward to the end of the day when the hour comes for our little chat.

There was a brilliant sun all day, but the thermometer was in the 70's instead of the 80's, which really made a great difference, and my impulse to garden increased an accompanying 10 per cent.

Last night I fell to reading a biography of Jean Lafitte and what with a bumper of ice tea along side, I lingered on at my record changing and plying of ice cubes until after midnight, which is silly when the dawn comes earlier these days. But 5 o'clock found me at Arenbourg and the ozone was such that I seemed to accomplish much more than on hotter morns.

But most of the stuff I did was negative, for I am slaying Johnson grass before it goes to seed to keep it from spreading, and to orrow I am determined to let the stuff go and devote myself to more positive things such as spading about the fruit trees and the like, on the theory they will eventually dominate the grass anyway.

We could stand another shower any time the elements feel in the mood, although the birthday magnolias continue to unfold their tender green leaves and one or two of the longer established ones are making signs of growth which are impressive. The grass around them, too, is pretty impressive, but that will be taken care of on the morrow.

With Celeste and Madam Regard away until Thursday or Friday, and pilgrims mighty few momentarily, - and I pause to knock wood, - neither little Miss Alberta nor I are deflected much from our respective lines of endeavor. Without waiting for any other excuse than to satisfy my own impulse, I arrayed myself in my birthday shirt for supper tonight, and it felt grand. I suppose about tomorrow or possibly Thursday "re. Rand will be dragging la Dornon down this way and with their presence I really might preen my feathers to greater effect, but the nice thing about getting "rigged up" to impress nobody, one has the ultimate in satisfaction, just enjoying one's own gaiety.

3589

I guess the enclosures aren't of a y especial interest, although the Cincinnati memoir of old Harvard days was charming.

Apparently the doings of Father Becker, as reported to Dora, must have gotten into the latter's hair, and it was kind of him to take the trouble to quote from the Mark Twain volume to illustrate a point. I believe Dora didn't know the Reverend Father although he was of course acquainted with Mr. Bachelier and I remember once he and I drove the latter back to his home on Little River following a Melrose visit.

In your last letter you were so good as to give me some particulars regarding the current doings of the F. D. R. Jurs. It was all news to me, and I had heard nothing of the impending divorce on the part of the former Ethel Dupont. From the pictures taken at the time of their marriage and subsequent ones in the family circle at the White House, the difference in types as typified by her and him recalled to mind a saying that one heard so often in Wilmington, Delaware where it was an axiom that all the Duponts were either unusually keen or definitely on the dull side. In recent years I have observed this phenomenon which is so pronounced in the Brandon family, where each generation seems to alternate between a whiz and a dud.

I hope I did not lead you astray in giving the name of the magazine incorrectly wherein appears the article, "First Lady of the World".

You mention the forth coming serial from the pen of Madam Eleanor, and that will appear, as I understand it, in the June McCall's.

Last night's news broadcast over the San Antonio National system gave quite an elaborate account of the speech made by Dr. Bunch at the dinner given in his honor at the Waldorf last night by some U. S. group. I wish they had mentioned the names of some of the Americans present but that detail was omitted. Something tells me the Dixiecrat Senators were not among those who graced the board.

Little Miss Alberta confided to me this evening that she noticed but one difference at Melrose, as opposed to former times. When Miss Cammie was alive there were no red bugs in this part of Louisiana, but there must be some now, as she found one on her knee last night. I chided her gently for not using Mrs. Eddy on the thing when she asked me if I thought she should use coal oil or vasoline. I shall consult the Eddy early in the morning and if the home remedies haven't put her to rights, I can always send a telegram to New Orleans for her reader to go to work on her bug.....

3590

Wednesday, May 11th, 1949.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your Friday letter in this morning's post.

I try to keep abreast of Manhattan weather conditions, but somehow your recent heat wave escaped me. I am glad you escaped it too, albeit it more entirely, by your hejira to Hollis. I loved your account of supper in the garden which sounded entrancing. If the journey out there isn't too exhausting, or the trip back home, I hope you can make it often.

I am touched by your expression of sympathy over the passing of my old friend. Until you mentioned it, I hadn't thought about the reflection of his sentiments as expressed in his letters, but I reckon they did indicate a regard for me that didn't exactly parallel his feelings, expressed verbally, toward the Reverend Father. Poor little man, so terribly alone at the end.

Once, perhaps half a dozen years ago, I started putting down the names of people passing this way, but I soon found that was too much of a chore, for when the last one had left, I was glad to forget the whole business and turn to something or other I had been deflected from undertaking for hours on end. But sometimes I wish I had the mental fortitude to begin again, and perhaps I shall.

This morning was alright, for I spent some delicious cool hours at labor among the lilies and Johnson grass at Arenbourg, and after a 9:30 breakfast at Melrose, puttered around the overloading bamboo patches at Yucca.

The afternoon was more concentrated, however. First came 50 colored youths and maidens from the Natchitoches Trade School. Three or four teachers were with them, - and the whole party was negro. The place somehow vibrated, and ever one seemed to have a nice time. As the majority of them were in the 17 year old class, I didn't frighten little Miss Alberta by putting her or her paintings on display. They had been making a little tour of the parish, - Grande Ecure, Corham, - of all places save geographically, and Melrose. Four or five of the more industrious ones had brought notebook and pencil with them and their hand flew as I shared with them the old tales about the Yucca of the old days, stressing the aspects of building methods found in this old mud house, its wooden bars at the windows as opposed to the iron ones in the African House, the types of wild animals infesting this section of Louisiana in early times, and so on.

3591

Just as I spend them on their way, Dr. and Mrs. Rand arrived. Dr. Rand wanted to talk with me some more about Dr. Josiah Hale, a physician and botanist of note who had lived between here and Alexandria, after coming to this section from Port Gibson. He was the first resident of the Louisiana Scientific Society, and on dying in 1856, some of his botanical manuscripts went to Smithsonian Society from which Dr. Rand is procuring photostatic copies. He had heard me mention at one time that Dr. Hale had been a favorite pupil of old Rafinesque, - Audubon's friend, when Rafinesque taught at Transylvania College in Kentucky. I have no Wachez papers of 1856, - Dr. Hale had formerly lived at Port Gibson and Canton, Miss., but I did check on my file to see, and for no reason, handed a copy of several months collection from an 1849 Wachez newspaper which Dr. Rand, on opening, laid eyes forthwith on an announcement for that year of Transylvania College, giving the date of its establishment, its tuition rates, etc., which of course, delighted him, and in another page found Dr. Affleck's advertisement for 400 different kinds of apples, hundreds of types of pears, 30 or 40 kinds of plums, etc., all to be had at Ingleside, his plantation hard by the home of B. L. C. Wailles at Washington, Miss.

We were having a lovely time when a mess of stupid pilgrims appeared that or who spoiled the balance of that sitting. But after I had made short work of them, and had re-joined Dr. Rand, I was glad to see Dr. Belamor appear, - glad both to see her and that she and Dr. Rand might meet, for, strangely enough, they had never contacted each other during all the several years past when they must have passed each other in the road frequently.

Dr. Rand told me he had flown down to New Orleans last week to chat for a little with Dr. Mattas who is really remarkably alert in spite of his advanced years. Dr. R. admires Dr. M. extravagantly. He spoke to him of his unpublished ten volume study on Louisiana medicine and asked if he had anything on Dr. Hale in his Alexandria and Rapides Parish days. Dr. Mattas lifted the volume of his unpublished manuscript and told Dr. Rand to take it home with him, asking that he treat it kindly as there is no copy. I thought that so generous, and I liked what Dr. Rand said in speaking of him: "You know how Dr. Mattas is, - possessed of the heart of a woman, - so unselfish and generous".....

And so on reaching Alexandria by the afternoon plane, Dr. Rand set typewriters going and had the whole volume transcribed, writing at the same time to Dr. Mattas, thanking him for the loan of the material, and confessing he had taken the liberty to have it transcribed and saying that he was having the transcript returned to him with the original text. So Generosity paid back its debt in coin of Goodness, and two grand persons must have made each other's hearts the warmer by this civilized exchange of courtesies.

So glad L. J.'s problem has eased temporarily. If the trouble is what we think, it will go in cycles, - longer rather than shorter, let us hope.... Now for tenderleaf and to fold....

3592

Thursday, May 12th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Brace yourself, for this is going to be duller than usual, for not only will this turn out to be little more than a continuation of yesterday's note, but I write it rather late, what with the Worsleys having passed this way about first dark, and have but recently departed as the hour approaches midnight.

But first off, I want to mention one or two things Dr. Rand mentioned on Wednesday which space limited me from taking up in the memo of yesterday. He told me the leading Alexandria newspaper, The Town Talk, brings out a supplement today, devoted to various aspects of medicine in Rapides Parish, of which Alexandria is the chief city. I believe he contributed an article, but I am not certain. In any event, he says he will send me a copy and an article by Dr. Matas in last Sunday's Picayune, too.

On the surface, I suppose, it will not be apparent that this exposition of Parish medicine has any ulterior motive, but I believe it is actually designed as subtle propaganda against the current Truman Health Insurance bill. The American Medical Society is certainly going out of its way to stall that measure before it gets started, - and I hope they fail. But it will have some good effects, - these efforts, - for the supplement alone should contain some interesting particulars that might not have come to light otherwise. I shall send you the supplement and the Matas article as soon as I receive it, and it may or may not turn out to be of interest.

Don left the lady doctor next door for a while, Celeste and Madam Rega d having returned from their frolic during the day. He brought down some old letters and land grants he had recently acquired and read many of them, hoping I might set him straight as to the identity of some of the people. He also let me borrow a couple of the letters included in the batch. The were personal letters, addressed to somebody or other in Natchitoches, written in 1812 by Levin Wailles, while Un. S. Commissioner in Louisiana, settling property rights of all claimants living South of Tennessee. I thought it would be nice to make copies of these letters, - one to be inserted in our copy of the B. L. C. Wailles diary which holds some other Levin Wailles papers, and the duplicate to go to Miss Nellie whom one never fails to interest when old Wailles papers come to her attention.

Aside from an excellent bottle of Vermont, Don also brought me a present in the form of a history of the Civil War, published in the 1880's in French, under a New Orleans imprint. It has

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some copper plates and may or may not be of any account, but it will be a decorative item at least in the Civil War section.

And one other gift he brought me which I am ever so impatient to turn through, - France Pittoresque, about a foot in width and length and about 2 inches fat, published, I believe, in Paris about 1835. From a hurried glance, it appears to be a collection of particulars about all the departments of France, with a map of each, and a big old map, folded and somewhat frayed, of Paris. But what is of particular interest is the dozen of illustrations scattered through the thing, apparently of well known personalities, buildings and landscapes. Although much had disappeared during the Revolution, I imagine there may well be sketches of other monuments which lingered on down to 1870, - such buildings as the Chateaux of St. Cloud, Meudon, Bellevue, etc., and possibly St. Germain-en-Laye and so on. Of all the people in America, only you and I would relish an opportunity to turn through this old volume, and so I think I shall set it on our holding shelf for Arenbourg, - there are so many things we shall find on that shelf when eventually we find time to relax for a sitting or two.

Calls for help from the garden brought the conference Don and I were holding to an end. The moon was quite up, and it seems the lady doctor, in journeying from Celeste to Ucca had been frightened when Sam Brown's big old dog, intrigued at the presence of Dr. Eleanor's tiny dog she was carrying in her arms, jumped on to investigate, and in so doing, knocked Madam Worsley slap down. On getting up, she lost her sense of direction and what with the darkness of the moment, could see no lights in any direction and accordingly was forced to cry out for aid and comfort. I am forever being impressed by the proximity and the vast distance to and from civilization in which every once in a while we are finding ourselves.

But, the lady rescued, we fortified ourselves with some wine at Ucca and so got conversation going. Don, however, could tear himself away from his documents and Dr. Eleanor wanted to talk about people and latest wrinkles in art and science, and so I had the fun of doing a Charles McCarthy, as on two sets of knees at the same time.

The portrait is going long nicely, it is said, but from the description, I find difficulty in imagining it. It will be a head and shoulders thing, a drapery of scarlet over one shoulder, and a background of brilliant begonia leaves. I am glad the artist and model are pleased, for after all, that is the main thing.

"The Third Bar" is being read at the moment, - and liked, - but the old documents came up for discussion on the other side of my sofa just then, and so I didn't have an opportunity to ask for details.

And so the day has run out, - and there were other things, - Arenbourg, etc

3594

Friday, May 13th, 1949.

Memorandum:

To hand your letter of the 9th. A few times in a life time, one hears something that by some remarkable gift, has summed up everything that makes life worth living. May I congratulate you, -- and may I congratulate me, for you said it and I heard it, - and in saying it, you made life worth while.

There were other letters in today's post. The one from Dr. Miller is remarkable because she writes so infrequently and usually so briefly. I find it interesting that she didn't mention having talked with Bobina recently and that no reference is made to a Louisiana visit. Come to think of it, of all the trips I ever knew her to make, none were based on any contemplation but were the result of some unexpected circumstance. As I recall, she hadn't the vaguest notion of heading out for the Congo until she was actually on the boat bearing her thence. I remember she stopped off in Tokio for a week but when her trunks failed to arrive on a certain vessel, she changed her plans to continue her journey and staid put for 7 years. Her unexpected flight from Melrose to Atchez was trumped up in a morning, and perhaps we shall see her on Kane River when she, - most of all, least anticipates it.

I was a little depressed by Miss Nellie's note. I have a feeling she may never come back to Atchez. I don't know why, but she always seems so much more remote than when in Atlanta, although Heaven knows I never see her when she is closer by several hundred miles.

I don't recall having mentioned that a few days ago I had a telephone from Mrs. Vernon Cloutier who is lavishing so many kind things on the old Narcisse Prudhomme house on the Joyous Coast. She sketched out some elaborate doings for a reception introducing the parish to the new name of her plantation, now that the stone has been set in the terrace bearing the name "Beaufort". She asked me if this Friday night or Saturday night would suit me better. I told her neither would fit in to my program and suggested that instead of something so extensive, she confine herself, - if a party she must have, - to a morning coffee. She seemed a little disappointed, but a morning coffee was the only thing I would agree to attend, and so the business will transpire tomorrow morning.

I should so much like to pass by the place and stop in and see all the fine things she has performed, and they do she has done an excellent job, securing the best architect in Louisiana, and paying no attention to expenditures, just so long as the little old house came out as she would have it, - such things as having

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old wall papers reproduced and ante bellum fabrics woven anew, and the word knows what all. Her taste is usually perfect, and I shall be glad to see another old house brought back into its former state, - or better. I still would get a much better impression if we didn't have to have a flock of people present for busting the champagne over the Beaufort monument, etc.

I was rather tired when I finally jumped into my tub last night, but somehow I felt refreshed and what with the ice tea calling for attention, I did sit down for a little while, and finished the biography of Jean Lafitte.

In this morning's post came the Education of Henry Adams, and so I was glad I had the boards cleared, for tonight, I shall begin reading that volume, and liking it as much as formerly, I reckon. I presume I shall tend to slide over the too lengthy section wherein he dwells on his attempt to reduce history to a predictable science instead of considering it as an art, as it really is, - but the rest of the volume will merit attention, for unquestionably it is an excellent volume. I must say, however, that I never could understand how some people, - and I know one lady in particular, who could read the whole volume in a single sitting, - and my candid opinion is that she got mighty little out of it, going at that speed.

I intended remarking further back something I heard from B. Randolph who was here a week or two ago with Mrs. Rand. She had seen Sister somewhere in South Louisiana, and among other things, Sister told her that the Henrys had locked up in the armoirs the diary of Leston Rudhomme so she couldn't get at it. I recall that one of her friends from New Orleans borrowed the volumes a year or two back, and that must have given Sister the idea that they were of value. I noticed that on her last two trips to Melrose, she had gone into the library several times, but always emerged empty handed. As books are something she has never read, I pondered at the time what she could be searching for, but that must have been the answer in B.'s report. There is only one slight error on Sister's part, for while it is true they are locked up in "an" armoire, it wasn't the door of the Henrys who probably don't even know of their existence, and no matter how many keys she may fetch with her to get into the Melrose armoirs on her next visit, something tells me she isn't likely to find what she is searching for. I feel so strongly that Leston's diary, - like the Melrose mulattoes, should remain on Cané River, - and I think they will. I don't recall if Leston ever mentioned his Uncle Narcisse very much, although I shall think of him tomorrow when I go to Beaufort, and I shall pass by what is left of the old avenue where he used to march up and down with his Blackstone, - so often carried, so seldom cracked.

And so the week spins out, and in coming to a close, it has been such a happy week, thanks to just one person, and I thank you again with all my heart for your lovely, lovely message....

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Sunday, May 15th, 1949.

Memorandum:

And so, on Saturday, I spilled baptismal liquid on the Cloutier plantation name plate. The actual stone appears to be of granite, about a foot square, sunk into the brick pavement of the semi-patio at the rear of the house, and bears the simple inscription:

1830

BEAUFORT

1949.

At supper on Saturday night, Van Henry, having heard in town that I had been on the Joyous Coast in the morning, asked me if I thought it true, from what I had observed, that, as reported in town, some thirty thousand dollars had been expended on the place.

My answer was in the affirmative.

Long have I admired people who treated ante bellum plantation homes with gentle hands. But the Cloutiers have done more than be kind to a corps. They have rescued and glorified an epoch. And I came home, wanting to re-read Lyle's account of little Leston's account from the diary of his visits to Uncle Narcisse's home, for I imagined I had just seen the place in much the same elegance that it embraced when luxuries were rampant and cotton was King.

Picture a house not unlike Yucca in its main lines, single story, but longer and lighter in construction, - a certain paleness that might be expected to manifest itself by white builders untutored in the earlier heaviness of African Yucca, - and 75 years its junior. The house is two rooms in depth rather than one, as at Yucca, and an "L" has been added on the West, projecting to the rear of the house, whose roof has been brought down at the back to cover the half patio thus formed by the "L".

Perhaps the interior is almost too sumptuously furnished, reminding one not so much of the ante bellum atmosphere as a contemporary apartment at 270 Park. But the rosewood and mahogany are family heirlooms and the portraits original ancestral likenesses, executed by unknown itinerant artists, and even though their gold leaf frames glow richly, their design is severe and in perfect taste. Amplitude undulates around and about and beneath, and even the draperies, - as romantic design of the 1830's of Toile de Jouy inspiration are three widths in expanse where two might have done on a pinch.

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I a breakfast room? - was delighted to find a sedate painting of Mr. Audubon's Cardinals, reproduced by Lois Lester, and further on, a contemporary rendition in oils of some magnolias just to make little Miss Alberta swoon.

But time was running out, and we accordingly descended the double staircase at the back of the house, the bannister being of handwrought iron, of contemporary manufacture by a New Orleans foundry, using one of the restrained ante bellum patterns. A delicious breakfast was served on this lower level, and the food was delicious, but I paid little attention to the buzz of conversation, for my eye was on a cotton field, stretching away to the south, diagonally transversed by a line of cottonwoods, giving on a bayou. It occurred to me that here in the making might be a delightful sprawling English garden, not unlike the park at Malmaison, and before another year has elapsed, I'll bet cotton won't be growing in that field.

Before leaving I told Madam Cloutier her place, - the interior, lacked but one thing, - the genealogy of the Rudhomme family on which she has labored mightily in the past and brought down to date. She agreed the house would be a fitting place for such a thing but threw up her hands at knowing how to contrive such a thing decoratively in a limited wall space in her library. And so I invited her to come to see me at Yucca this week, and I shall show her that excellent thing of the Dauphin, embracing his papa's Bourbon line and his mama's Hapsburg connections, and with it as a pattern, I think the lady will be able to contrive something suitable and satisfying to her lovely Beaufort.

I can't think just why the matter coursed through my brain as we drove away, but perhaps I don't have to figure it out: to wit, that so far as my own volition be concerned, I would never take anyone to Beaufort except your own good self, for somehow, I guess, I felt that only you would be able to properly absorb the new with the old and thus appreciate the efforts, even those spilling over at the edges, of what had been done to bring back the home of little Lestan's Uncle Narcisse.

Both yesterday and today have been beautiful but we are in want of rain and tomorrow I begin watering the birthday magnolias.

Dr. - and came to see me this afternoon to talk over ante bellum botanists and the like, I know not how, but by some means we got around to Benjamin Chase of Mantua, and tonight Dr. - and has taken my transcript of the diary home with him to extract a section about the New Orleans hospitals in 1819, which he in turn wants to send to Dr. Matas, sending along with it a little note from me to the good doctor, giving some particulars about the character and authenticity of old Dr. Chase.

And so closes another week end with another dawn to begin another but 8 hours distant. I shall make an envelope for this note forthwith, jump into a hot bath, collapse for half an hour in my arm chair to read a couple of pages from Mr. Adams' Education, sipping a glass of ice tea the mean while, and contemplating the huge silver tankard on my desk, freighted down with giant magnolias, against which is propped my most elegant of birthday cards, - the design of which you undoubtedly see as vividly in your own mind's eye as do I

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Monday, May 16th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The weather continues warm and dry, but heavy nightly dews are lending a measure of moisture to our Arenbourg children.

This morning, however, I began watering the birthday magnolias, and shall keep up the program until we have a good shower. They would get more benefit from watering at sundown, of course, but domestic and secretarial arrangements make that impracticable at present. Accordingly I dig two holes near the extremities of the roots, filling it up with sandy soil, on which I pour the water. I believe this will give them a good drink before too much evaporation sets in, and I must say that up to now they look alright.

As between this paragraph and the one above, my secretary has arrived, and I am enchanted to have your gay note of the 11th. So glad you liked the Harness likeness of the African House, and thanks no end for the enclosure covering Madame Monroe, a part of which I am setting aside until the morrow, as my "secretary" was suddenly called away in the midst of things to see something about some member of his household.

How unexpected, and yet how characteristic of you to have discovered the item about Madame Monroe, what with my recent mention of that lady's name in conjunction with the Mistress of the White House of the preceding administration. I know I am going to absorb the balance of the article with as much relish as the beginning.

It seems to me I have had a picture of the Fort Worth Botanical Garden before, but I can't recall if I sent it along or not. I can't recall if it is at Fort Worth or at San Antonio that an old stone quarry was incorporated into the public gardens and developed to unusual beauty. This card came today and I asked Madam Regard to read it to me with one from Kate Perkins. I hope La Lake will not forget I want a sketch of the Purple Lady, which, when and if it comes to hand, I shall pass along promptly so it may be included in your volume by the latter. My sitting with Madam Regard was brief, for before she had finished the Perkins message, the McCooks arrived from town. They leave in three weeks for Savannah, driving North along the coast on their way to Boston where their son graduates from Harvard this June.

I don't seem to be able to get beyond the kindergarten stage in Mr. Adams' Education. I find the section dealing with his childhood impression of his grandfather, President A. A. Adams, both charming and profound. I like his political speculations

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arising from his first visit at the age of 15 to Mount Vernon.

But interruptions of one type or another seem to have distracted me so often during my last two sittings that I have constantly gone back to re-read sections, and so have made very slow progress. A major interruption occurred last night at the beginning of a page when I upset a full glass of ice tea, heavy alike with ice cubes and sugar, in my lap. But the Adams portrait of Adams from 6 to 15 is of such quality that I enjoy going back and reading it over a second or third time following such ship wrecks as mentioned.

I got off the sketch of Benjamin Chase for Dr. Matas this morning, vouchsafing the veracity of the man by quoting various Adams County authorities as old Mr. Alexander Postletwaite, Mrs. Nellie Ayres, Miss Corinne Henderson and others who had known the Master of Mantua over a period of years and who agreed "Uncle Chase" was "as truthful as the day is long". But shortly after posting the letter, I bumped into Miss Alberta in the garden, and after chatting with her for a few moments, realized how dubious is anybody's testimony, for little Miss Alberta in trying to prove some point or other, declared no one could write in the country, - a typical Kinsey statement, citing the fact that Lyle never did any writing at all, except at Baton Rouge. Now everybody knows that except for Gumbo LaYa, every book Lyle ever wrote was typed out on this machine on this desk in this room. He has referred to it a dozen times to me as has the Madam, and yet if someone in New Orleans were searching for data for a biography on Lyle, it would seem that little Miss Alberta might be just the person to contact. Lyle always used to say she was the most confused artist he had ever known, but I am wondering if some of her present mix up may not come from Aunt Maude who would probably like to give the world the impression that all the "Bon Opi" were laid and hatched under her own thatched roof.

In sketches Bob Ballant has done, the point of creation in Lyle's efforts has been skated over with such delicacy that one would assume they were all contrived in New Orleans, and I am not sure, but I am under the impression the same may be the case in Mr. Dryer's Gilmore volume. I wish I could remember the old line:

"Seven rich cities contend for Homer, dead,--
Through whose streets the living Homer had to beg his bread".

I wish it were tomorrow so I could finish off Madame Monroe, but taking what is to hand, I had better gird up my loins, - or ungird them and see if I can't get the youthful Mr. Adams off to Harvard without swimming through a pool of tea....

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Tuesday, May 17th, 1949.

Memorandum:

May I thank you for the most excellent letter arriving in today's post.

I am so glad you liked having the quilt, as designed and executed by the Memtoyer ~~member~~ bracket of the Cane River noblesse. And I am so glad you ran across some familiar old friends in the Two Romantics. I often ponder on the marvel of the one-ness of our interest in such personalities. I have talked with three people who have read the book, one of them being the one who borrowed this volume from me, and not one of them ever mentioned anything about the contents, and, I regret to assume, probably never heard of a y of the people you mentioned as being present.

On occasion, I have felt so sorry for people who have had to read an old will or indenture or newspaper clipping of the ante bellum period for me. From the tone of their voice, I could readily tell they were merely reading words and that the vast drama the dry words so readily would convey to a person who would vitalize them with action and personality, never flickered through the reader's brain. What a pity those people have to read, and what pearls they pass up for clam shells or oysters.

I am glad there may have been a faint suggestion of the perfume from the Arenbourg sweet olive still lingering in the package when you opened it. We must eventually plant some more on one of Arenbourg's birthdays, don't you think?

Dr. Eleanor blew in to see me just before supper time, "Sweet Alberta Ben Bolt" having detained her in her course through the gardens, which, perhaps, is just as well, since she arrived in something of a flurry. I was at this machine when she tapped at the door and entered at my shout of "Entre". She exclaimed that she proposed to start divorce proceedings against her husband as soon as she got back to town, for she had expected him to telephone her from Threaveport or some place at 5 o'clock and had failed to do so. She declared she couldn't stand it to love a person so much that whenever he failed to telephone at a certain hour when out of town, for a phobia always spreads pictures of gory automobile accidents, etc., etc.

Secretly I am always entranced to see such manifestations of affection, for both husband and wife are really madly in love.

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but at the same time I regret the manifestation of frayed nerves which such paroxysms indicate.

But it didn't take me long to get her back on the track, the divorce business laughed at and on to the real purpose of her dash down the river to see me. Her patient, Dr. Sarah Clapp of the College,--an old friend of the Madam's and mine, is on the border of amnesia and Dr. Eleanor came down to ask if she might be parked at Melrose for three days this coming Saturday through Monday. Gladly would I kick out the red carpet, --except one doesn't know what plans the daughter and the youngest son of the family might have up their sleeves for the week end, -- and so I told the physician it would be better for her to make reservations at some hospital tentatively, and that I will telephone her to give whatever news comes to hand on Thursday and Friday, so that we may continue to hope the place may be comparatively quiet, -- and if other plans, or rather plans of the Phrevoport branch to descend on Melrose for the week end, it would of course be out of the question for Dr. Sarah to find any peace at this bend of the river.

and then if we fell to talking about the Aswells. Mr. Aswell has been quite depressed of late, for since the publication of "Mid Summer Fires", he has sold nothing, all his scripts sent to magazines being rejected. During this period of reverse, he has been drowning his sorrows now and then with whiskey, -- or trying to, and hasn't been too successful in that attempt, either. The resulting tension beside the domestic hearth has been sympathetically acute, and accordingly the portrait has had to be put on the shelf temporarily.

A side glance at the state of things which may or may not indicate something is revealed by this episode. Dr. Eleanor saw Rosalyn the other evening but the latter left for home rather earlier than usual. Having planned nothing for the dinner hour, the lady doctor took herself to the movies where "Elvin Douglas" was featured in a film. The theatre was rather dark, and in the midst of things Rosalyn, no less, quite unintentionally stumbled over the lady doctor in trying to reach a seat further along in the same row.

The supper bell interrupted the tale at just that point, and I don't know if Madam Aswell ever recognized Madam Worsley, but wasn't that tricky of fate to put them both in the same theatre and in the same row.

Celeste spent the whole day in the big house with a couple of husky servants. I passed by a room where they were doing things once, but kept straight on my course. At 2 o'clock she sent to ask me if I wouldn't have a Coca-Cola with her at the big house. I would, and she consulted me on several points, moving the piano from one end of the house to the other and so on. Thus the shadow of the Madam gradually fades.....

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Wednesday, May 18th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The enclosure from Miss Nellie, along with her brief note, is what remains of the Beaumont letter, sent her about December 10th. As it was intact when it left here, I take it, the letter must have received rough treatment along the way. As Miss Nellie was always ever so much interested in the old brass cannon, referred to in this letter, I thought the letter might be of especial interest to her, but apparently she skipped the line containing the artillery. If you should care to keep the letter with your Natchez things, I should be entranced.

I wish I had made a copy of the Chase sketch I rote for Dr. Matas on Monday, for on reading your enclosure about Mrs. James Monroe, and learning she was a Cartwright, I recalled having mentioned Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright in the Chase article, and I am beginning to wonder if there was some relation. I might ask Alice Walworth Graham, but on second thought, that would be a waste of time, since Alice is ever so poor as a correspondent. Perhaps we may do some investigating on our own hook some day, and that would be more fun.

Mrs. James Monroe was certainly a sight, getting herself enthroned on a dais to receive her guests. It seems to me that in their first administration the Washingtons at their joint levees were raised a little above the throng by making use of a dais, but I am under the impression that was more to save themselves from being crushed by the throng than because of leanings toward grandeur, although it seems to be generally agreed that of all the Presidents, George Washington went in heavier for liveries, outriders, staffs, batons and so many trappings of State that he did come pretty close to putting on all of royalty's regalia except the crown. There is no telling what might have happened had he married not Martha Dandridge Custis but the lady who was to become Madam Monroe. I am so glad to have had this clipping and thank you again for sharing it with me.

I saw Madam Regard for a few moments alone today. She spoke of the unusually large funeral at St. Augustin's Church last Sunday. They were burying one of the Balthazar boys, -- mulatto, of course, -- who had been shipped home from Germany where he and four other soliders had been killed by their officer. Wouldn't you love to know the story behind all that. Surely there will be nothing in local papers about it, and so I had better get my grapevine to jingling a little and see if I can't get some particulars.

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To borrow a phrase from the ante bellum period: - "We are greatly in want of rain". The cotton fields along Cane River are of a soil which doesn't cake much, so the cotton is thriving on these dry days and warm nights, - last night it was 79 at 11 o'clock. But in the Little River section where the land is very stiff, it is impossible for the newly germinated seeds to come to the surface unless a rain loosens the soil, and it now appears as though all the cotton fields in that area will have to be re-planted when a shower does arrive. According to the radio the Fort Worth area is flooded. If only we could get some of that.

But I continue to water the birthday magnolias at Arenbourg, and I believe they are responding very well, for they have a good green in their leaves and new ones are beginning to unfold.

Switching back to the cotton, it was interesting to me when I began giving thought to the subject generally, that planters always hope to get their seed in the ground in late April or early May in this area. And the reason for all the rush is the fact that if the cotton gets an early start, the toughness of the bolls, if developed early, tends to discourage the bowl weevil from boring a whole in it and ruining the thing. Something tells me my Little River friends, - Dee-dee, Attrice, the Dark Duke and all, will have a bowl weevil problem this year if it doesn't rain before long so they can re-plant and get things going in the right direction before June rolls 'round.

I guess the Barnes letter is of no especial interest, but I send it along regardless, so you may keep your finger on the pulse of that new friendship. He is certainly a very kind person. Isn't it odd that no sooner than an elegant belt arrives from the Gages, the trappings for another starts coming to the surface from the Barneses.

You would have laughed if you could have heard poor little Miss A. this morning when I told her that F. D. R. Jr., had been successful in winning a seat in the House of Representatives.

"Well, we might as well admit we are lost," was her wail. "Just look at England."

I look vaguely to the North Eastward but didn't see much.

"You see," she explained, "all the Roosevelts are Socialists and before we know it, F. D. R. Jr. will be in the White House and then we'll be right when England is today."

And so, if you gradually begin to feel that Manhattan is slipping grandly out to sea, don't be alarmed, for it will probably be drifting off in the general direction of the British Isles.....

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Thursday, May 19th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The hot weather continues without the vaguest suggestion of a rain cloud in the skies. But the Arenbourg children are making it alright, and the things I am watering are undoubtedly growing, but while the others aren't suffering for want of water, they are not getting the seasonal growth that otherwise would be theirs.

I haven't heard anything along the grapevine regarding the death of the soldier buried at St. Augustin's last Sunday, but I did hear of another military funeral today that convinces me more than ever that soldiers should be buried where they fall.

Some pilgrims from Champagne, Illinois, were brought down from town today by a lady whose daughter was married to a soldier, killed in battle in 1944. Last year the young widow married Representative Wheat of this area. This week (interruption) -- This week, the military funeral of the first husband will be held in Natchitoches and the second husband will accompany his wife to lend her support and share her grief at the grave. There is something wrong with that picture, which wouldn't arise for contemplation, of course, had not somebody insisted on re-burial. It seems apt to quote again from John Erskine's "Helen of Troy", - "Just as we begin getting civilized, somebody always comes along and suggests we go on a picnic".

I was sorry to hear of the death of James T. Adams on last night's news broadcast. They mentioned his "Epic of America", "The Adams Family" and something about Jefferson, but I did not catch the precise title of the book. I have read the two former ones a couple of times and like them, for Mr. Adams certainly wrote well. Not always did I subscribe completely with his interpretations, for from what little I have read from his pen at the inception of the Roosevelt Administration, it appeared he was leaning heavily toward the Hoover side, which seems odd for a man of his calibre. If memory serves, the Adams fortune, - the James T. Adams, - was in Cuban sugar, and when Mr. Roosevelt effected complete independence of Cuba, that stroke in behalf of Cuba and the Good Neighbor policy may have pinched the Adams purse a little, - or aroused the fear that ultimate results of the policy might reduce the sugar dividends, and perhaps that may have had something to do with the Adams concept of things Roosevelt in general.

I find in the Dormon enclosure an excellent example of over-stating one's case. She can't come to Melrose because she has company.

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and besides, she has to go to New Orleans to put Mrs Stearn's Winter garden to bed for the summer. Either the first or the second excuse should have been adequate but the combination somehow smacks of flim-flam.

Well, today being Thursday, and a Coca-Cola Queen scheduled to be entertained tomorrow, with a view of finding a likely magnolia in Miss Alberta's collection to grace her fine mansion in town, plus the fact that Mrs. Rand and some guests will be here for dinner the following day, along with a party in the afternoon given by Celeste, nobody is going to miss Miss D. Besides, I think she is perfectly right if Briarwood pleases her more than getting into the big road, I am all in favor of her "staying put". I know perfectly well that it would take a heap of pulling and hauling on somebody's part to ever get me to head out from Yucca to call on little Miss A. at Briarwood, but I hope I wouldn't think up and write two contradictory reasons for declining the invitation.

Today, being Thursday, Dr. Knipmayer came by as is his wont. He expected me to go on to Magnolia with him for dinner with Miss Sally but I declined. In desperation, I reckon I shall have to accept that invitation before long in order to get it out of my hair.

The doctor said he is having horse trouble at Cypress, - the little hamlet with a couple of dozen houses down an non-descript road, half way between Montrose and Bayou Matchez. A delegation from the town came to his office, complaining that a horse, belonging to a negro, kept wandering about the village, invading their doorsteps, etc., and in view of a terrible sore on the horse's leg, making it impossible for the poor thing to last very long, they asked the Health Department to have the horse done away with. And so the doctor sent for the negro who, in turn consulted a veterinarian, and then reported back to Dr. K. According to the negro, the veterinarian declared the horse was by no means doomed but merely required a slight operation and some serious treatment. He therefore pleaded that his only animal be not slain. Dr. Knipmayer sympathetically asked if the horse seemed to be responding to the professional treatment it was receiving but the owner explained that nothing could be done for another couple of weeks so far as treating the animal was concerned, for it would be not until a fortnight hence that the moon would be right to warrant undertaking a cure.

It just so happens that the Cypress citizens are hill-billies and the mere fact that the negro is colored is sufficient to get the pot boiling without much ado, and so the owner was advised to restrain his horse from public appearance until after the change of the moon when a cure would be attempted. So much for the scientific and humanitarian states of mind of Cypress in this year of grace, 1949....

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Friday, May 20th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The weather continues cloudless, hot and dry.

It was even hotter in one spot which I neglected to mention yesterday.

When Dr. Knipmayer was leaving, I noticed a fine bonfire in the wood lot behind the Bindery. I hadn't seen Celeste in the morning but Madam Regard told me she understood she had undertaken to set the Bindery to rights, - a two story building, the lower floor for the binding of books, the upper floor for the storage of papers.

On leaving Dr. Knipmayer at Miss Alberta's studio, I strolled over to the wood lot where four stalwart negroes were playing a fine conflagration, perhaps 8 or 10 feet square.

I asked them if they would mind telling me why they were thus engaged on a day when the sun was already scorching.

"Us-es is cleaning up the upstairs bindery. Us-es is saving all the good Saturday Evening Posts. All this we done burned is jus old trash, --old newspapers so old most of 'em is a hundred years or so."

I thought of The Red River Gazette, a paper published for a limited time during the Reconstruction period, containing invaluable particulars regarding both political doings of the carpet baggers, resistance efforts of the local gentry, etc. I thought of several other files stored in the Bindery. Of course I knew not what had been consigned to the flames, but the embers were imposing in bulk, perhaps two to three feet in height.

"Us is jus finished," I was assured.

"Oh!" was my laconic response, as I clasped my hands behind me and strolled away, thinking the while of a remark coined or quoted by Henry Adams:

"patience is the last resource of fools and sages."

Truly, fire is wonderful as a cleaning agency, and how well do I remember when Faynie once told the Madam if she would only cut down the trees and bushes in the gardens, she wouldn't be troubled by mosquitoes.

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Of course I can't resist remarking that the guillotine must of cure Marie Antoinette of any further worries about headaches, too.

But all this was yesterday, and it is of course silly to cry over spilled milk or burned newspapers.

We had a pleasant sitting at dinner today, Mrs. Coombs coming to dine with us, and a perfect table companion to grace the board along side little Miss Alberta, for Mrs. Coombs is rather tall and refreshing in the Teutonic coloring that stands out so strikingly along side the diminutive, rather brunette Miss Kinsey. After dinner Mrs. Coombs wanted to talk about her children, a 20 year old son studying pre-med; a 13 year old daughter infatuated with a commercial aviator, a 9 year old son of supersensitive nerves, etc. I wanted to listen, too, for I like to see how the modern mother reacts to the age old problems of her professor husband and her vibrant off-spring. The hour she spent here in the country did her good, she said, and I must say I think she headed back into the swirl of things, strengthened in a measure by this opportunity to detach herself momentarily from some of the problems that apparently faced her too closely for a sufficiently clear perspective. I felt the sitting was as good an investment as I could have made at mid day.

The lady doctor telephoned to say that she might succeed in getting Dr. Sarah Clapp away from her mother's nomination for a day and wondered if she might spend that day at Melrose. She may. Madame Mere Clapp has always had her daughter under complete control to such a point, for example, that the other day, Dr. Sarah, aged 53, selected a new hat for herself in town, but was forced to return it to the shop when the 80 year old mother took one look at it and pronounced the color green entirely unsuited to her darling daughter. Dr. Sarah suffered from amnesia for six months a year ago, and Dr. Eleanor is laboring mightily at the moment to stave off a return of the same affliction, induced, according to the physician, by the utter selfishness of the mother.

I am impatient for tomorrow's dawn, for being Saturday and the tractors beginning their week end rest, I shall grab off Peter and Little King and have the latter plough the drive and the terrace at Arenbourg, while Peter will follow with the disks to a razzle-dazzle the roots of the Johnson Grass and other weeds flourishing so madly there in spite of the excessive dryness.

Then, perhaps a little sower will eventually make up its mind and that will spoil the roots of the Johnson grass, and at the same time will give impetus to the gangling tendencies of the mimosas which are looking fine but obviously just waiting for a couple of rain drops to start them going in all directions.....

3608

Sunday, May 22nd, 1949.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your elegant letter, together with the clipping about Anna Gould's Grand Trianon, in Saturday's post.

And how kind of you to give me such a splendid account of things as they swirl about the borders of your boudoir and the broader reaches of the world beyond.

It goes without saying that I am delighted to know about the new decors in your immediate surroundings. The bookcases sound elegant and although they were designed to give you endless additional space for your treasures, I am perfectly certain they are already filled and you are casting an eye of yearning about to discover where the next section may arise. The answer:- Arenbourg, of course.

And isn't it good that Anita was able "to get away from it all" for a little holiday on the coast. The "jam-up" in which she lives is enough to try the patience of a nerve-less Saint, what with so much of the immediately family living on top of each other, but surely the Hamburg interlude is bound to have given her a new lease on life in having provided her an opportunity to forget the domestic scene for too brief a moment.

And thanks, too, for telling me about the death of Miss McMein of which I had heard nothing, although I thought I had heard of Maurice Maeterlinck's passing indirectly in a Quiz program the other night when static was so devastating that I wasn't quite sure of the particulars. I think I shall see if his Blue Bird is available on Talking Records. It seems so long ago that I read it and I am curious to find out if I still like it as much. I am wondering if articles that will appear about Maeterlinck following his withdrawal from the scene will mention his proposed tour of the United States to lecture in the 1920's which came to an abrupt end with the first one, held at Carnegie Hall where the audience, and the author, suddenly discovered that in preparing for his lectures to be given across the United States, he had forgotten to learn English, which, I think, is the best thing next to somebody or other, possibly Henry Adams, who went to Berlin to study Law only to discover on matriculating that he hadn't learned German.

Saturday was a long, hot day, and withal busy. Before sun up, one tractor was ploughing and a second was harrowing the drive, Unit No. 2 and the terrace at Arenbourg, and a fine job was the result. What with the continued scorching sun today, I am sure many of the roots of weeds were killed, although nothing but a rain would have destroyed the roots of the Johnson Grass. But even so, that has had a good set-back.

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Mrs. Rand and B. Randolph (Mrs. Gordon Randolph of Kateland Plantation) arrived before I returned to Yucca. They remained for dinner, after which we came over here. Celeste was giving a party to which Mrs. Rand and B. had been invited, but they declined going until 5 p.m., when they gathered up little Miss A. and took her along with them, and thence on to Alexandria.

Dr. Eleanor, bored with the bridge and poker playing, came over to Yucca to call on me, after 4. and I had had supper at the big house and the ladies at the party were still going strong.

She told me of some of her experiences of late with Mrs. Olive Long Cooper, - Huey's sister, - who is head of the Art Department at the local college. She said her first encounter with her was a year or so ago when her office telephone rang and Madam Long-Cooper, a widow lady, ordered Dr. Eleanor to pass by her house at 6 o'clock and take her to her office to give her an examination. The doings were so extraordinary, the lady doctor said, - that is to say, the patient ordering the doctor to call for customers and deliver them, - that she accepted the order just to see how good it really could be. She says she gets along alright with her. Having heard that as Huey's and Earle's sister, she never ~~pays~~ pays her bills, - and no one dares to take her to long packed courts, - she thought she would send her a good stiff bill on the assumption she would never collect anyway. But lo! to her surprise, the bill was paid promptly and without protest.

Don had sent me a 2 volume set of "Traite des Arbres Fruitiers" by Monceau or some such, published in Paris in 1768. They are about a foot square and 2 inches thick, and contain many full page black and white illustrations of all kinds of fruits. Something more for the holding shelf. Frankly, I had always hoped these would come to hand, for they were in an old plantation library Don had been dicker for during the past year, for I had hoped Mr. Bachelier would enjoy them. It was certainly kind of Don to remember my interest in them and to present them to me and we shall enjoy them in Mr. Bachelier's memory, yes, no.

Dr. Rand came to see me this Sunday afternoon, returning the Chase book and bringing me a fine bottle of the Taylor port, and wanting to talk some more about local botanists. After a couple of hours conversation, I went with him to the camp where Mrs. Rand was alone, and they took me for a little ride in the speed boat, - passing by Arenbourg on the way.

Mrs. Rand said this morning she took little Miss Alberta, - who staid with her in Alexandria last night, - to see her mother, and while Miss Alberta was showing Mrs. Rand the paintings she had made while up here, Mrs. Rand's sister became so entranced with the one of Melrose, she bought it slap off, while her brother bought another, while Mrs. R. herself had purchased a magnolia from her yesterday. The "oca-tola" lady bought a hundred dollar one the day before, so I am sure little Miss A. was happy this noon when she boarded the train for New Orleans.

113540

Levin Wiles

3610

Memorandum:

Here is an exhibit of the corrupt mind which occasionally presents problems, and usually quite unexpectedly:

At supper on Friday night, said little Miss A. to Dan:

During the night, I heard what I guess must have been a dog moving against a chair on the gallery downstairs, and when I got up to look, I dropped a book on the floor. I hope it didn't disturb you."

Replied Dan, rather sourly:

"Miss Alberta, when I go to bed, I go to sleep and nothing ever awakens me."

After little Miss A.'s departure on Saturday, said Dan to J. H.:-

"I think we would do better not to have Miss Alberta here again. She makes a racket all night long and I can't ever get any sleep."

The above isn't of the slightest importance, except that it illustrates the curious workings of the mind of the child, next in age to Sister.

And speaking of the latter, her husband arrived her quite unexpectedly about 10:30 this morning. He had been summoned to testify at some Basco-Binog ambush trial in town, but as he wouldn't be called to the stand until mid afternoon, he came down here for dinner. I talked with him for an hour and a half or so. He didn't have anything interesting to tell, except in regard to their trip into South Louisiana. You may recall that there was talk about them going to visit Weeks Hall at New Iberia. I assume that that jaunt was engineered on Sister's impulse and that Weeks had nothing to do about it. It seems to me she said something about the trip being scheduled "after some real estate matters in New Orleans had been settled."

Be that as it may, the doctor said they went there, and were told by the butler that Mr. Hall had gone fishing. They tried to get in any way, but didn't succeed. Then they contacted somebody else they knew in New Iberia who told them that "seks hadn't gone fishing at all, in fact was at home right then. And so they returned for a second assault, - imagine, - but

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got not further on the second go-round, and so quitted the neighborhood for St. Francisville. They dropped in on Miss Louise, among other people. The doctor says the house is literally tumbling down and that the floor is rotting away in some of the rooms. This I can imagine, but only that, since I never seem prepared to accept anything as complete truth, stemming from such an informant.

Of the enclosures, they speak for themselves. I shall include but one Wailes letter in this post, and the other in a subsequent letter. The "Ben" referred to, of course, is the man we know as Col. B. L. C. Wailes, indicating that he did get into the Army, - or if not the Army, at least the militia. From the date of this letter, which I am not certain of at the moment, I take it B. L. C. was trying to enlist in the Army then being raised to be commanded by General Jackson against the British at New Orleans.

I hope Mrs. Brandon will tell us some additional particulars when she receives her copy shortly.

On the plantation things are going much as usual, and especially the sun, which continues to be turned on at ultimate capacity.. I'm afraid the absence of rain is beginning to spell out disaster for our little river friends, so far as producing any cotton goes for this year. On Arenbourg things are holding pretty well, although there will not be the amount of growth this year that some of Fort Worth's 12 inch downpour of last week would have aided.

This morning J. A. asked me if I would make a telephone call for him, as he had promised Dr. Rand last night he would ask Dr. Eleanor if she had any objections to having J. H. take Fany to the Baptist Hospital in Alexandria where Dr. Rand will give him a job of hospitalization. Dr. Eleanor has been treating Fany for asthma and a kidney difficulty, and had called on him an hour or two before Dr. Rand passed by to see him, for Fany looks after the "and camp. And so I talked with the lady doctor, and she said she thought it a swell idea for a thorough check up, and asked me to acquaint Dr. Rand with the type of medicine she had been administering, and requested me to advise her as to how Fany had re-acted to the latest treatments on her part. And so I walked over to Fany's house this morning, stopping to chat for a moment with little King who, looking awfully lonesome in hoeing in a great field all by himself. He has a crop of his own across the river where he and his wife live, but he had come over to help out his mama and step-papa. I found both Fany and his wife, Zelma, in bed. Zelma's knees are swollen to a radius of about 10 inches. I don't know what her difficulty may be, - some form of rheumatism, I reckon. But Fany was ever so much better and looking forward to his Alexandria trip with keen anticipation. It always floors me when people who have been there before, look forward to a trip to a hospital. But perhaps it is gayer in the colored wards. I must remember that, just in case.....

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Laurel Wailes
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3612

Tuesday, May 24th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Hot and dry.

But up the road along the Joyeous Coast where little Lestan used to stroll, uncracked Blackstone in hand, about an inch of rain brought relief to the parched vegetation.

I guess I didn't hold the t ought hard enough.

Only three times today did I crawl into my tub, for twice nice pilgrims slowed me up, just as I was about to whale away with my hoe and grass cutter. One very nice Mrs. Pierson from some place in West Texas was one of these deterrents. She has been revolving a story of color in her mind for some time, and had traveled over here to find out if the locale fitted in with her scheme, and it appears it did, whereupon the Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce sent her down here to chat with me. And I am glad, because it not only afforded me an opportunity to assist her but in reality I was sufficiently tired physically to grab at the first excuse to do nothing for an hour.

Celeste and Adam Regard were as busy as bees, and I saw them but from afar about first dark. Another party is brewing for the morrow, and so that meant spending the morning in town at the Beauty Shop and this afternoon in getting the pickles chilled to the proper degree, etc. Who was it who said: "Nero fiddles while the Red River Gazette burns."

I would speak of the enclosure, but I apologize for being a little hazy on several points, since I read it rather hurriedly. I shall run through it again tomorrow to get it well established in my mind.

If memory serves, I believe it is this letter that indicates a negro was being disposed of by lottery. Being a saleable commodity, I see no reason why the negro should not be disposed of in such a fashion. This, however, is the first time I ever heard of such a thing, and seems to hold in the suggestion for an interesting chapter in some novel wherein most unexpectedly somebody or other, not possessed of slaves, suddenly finds himself or herself possessed of one, possibly through a misunderstanding, based on the grounds that a lottery ticket was bought on the understanding it had to do with property, a turkey or some such, and turned out so different.

3613

Either in this letter or the one of yesterday, - the Wailes letter, I mean, there was some reference to the ladies on "the cove", and of course that set me to wondering. Obviously the reference was to ladies in the Natchitoches area, and in writing "cove" did Mr. Wailes, a most meticulous man, really mean to write "cove" or "coast", and if the latter, did he refer to La Cote Joyeuse, or was there a cove in this area. I am uncertain of the English for "ecore" which might have something to do with the matter, although I think, - or thought that Grande Ecore was not doing business until after 1832 when Red River, withdrawing from Natchitoches, pushed the main port from town to Grand Ecore some 5 miles to the North.

And I was struck by the mention of a "Mr. Dinsmore", and I am wondering if this could be Silas Dinsmore, a man of some prominence in the early Natchez country where, at one time, he received the right to operate a ferry, across the Mississippi, I believe, at Natchez. I must delve into Mr. Dinsmore a little more and see if this could be the same man.

I take it from what information avails in these letters, that the person to whom they are addressed is a surveyor, and therefore was probably of sufficient importance to have been quite prominent in this area, although I don't recall having heard of him before. It has always struck me as curious how one type of endeavor fluctuates so appreciably in value and public esteem with the passage of the years. I don't know if the office of surveyor means very much today, but it certainly did in the 1800 period in the Southwest. I think it didn't ever enjoy the political prestige that that of a person did in New England in the early 1700's, and yet it often did suggest people of unusual mental gifts and possession of considerable wealth. B. L. C. Wailes was a surveyor at one time, and even in the heyday of his planting, "Uncle" Dunbar of Natchez was actively engaged in surveying along with his planting activities, and at a time when he possessed of a million dollars which was a heap of money in the ante bellum period.

At Arenbourg, things are going alright, with nothing frowning much but everything seeming to maintain a healthy green, suggesting the absence of rain hasn't wrought any havoc as yet.

At Melrose, one of the young grandiflora magnolias is "showing off". This particular one was planted in 1942, and for the past seven years has stood perfectly still, not growing an inch. But now, and all of a sudden and in spite of the excessive dryness, it has abruptly made up its mind to catch up for lost time. During the past couple of weeks it has unfolded dozens of leaves and has shot up into the air alarmingly. Had it made up its mind in this direction a month ago, one might have attributed the move to the unusually favorable humidity, but there is just no excuse whatever for it to suddenly start skyward under present adverse circumstances. Plant personalities are so fascinating and so much more satisfactory than people, since they may frequently "act up" they seldom talk back.....

3614

Memorandum:

Hot and dry, with promises by the Weather Department for clear sunny weather straight ahead.

But the enclosure gives some hint as to how things go when things are the other way around,--and too much, it appears, is too much, no matter which way the elements turn.

I enjoyed Mrs. Lake's letter and feel you will, too, for her little details of the present picture of Fort Worth and the contrasting vignette of the Panhandle country is vivid and enlightening. The only thing I regret is that she did not set down her impressions of la Custine-Weaver. I presume, from the way she refers to the matter, that she may prefer to talk it rather than write it. In case she gets over this way, I shall jot down whatever she has to report so you may share the particulars with me.

I had a busy day, both at Arenbourg and at Yucca, with too many pilgrims, - some falling in at first dark, and so this letter will be of little account. Had it not been that the birthday children were bound to have an early morning drink, I reckon I might have made a briefer visit up the road, but whenever I do get there, I find so many things to interest me that I never exert sufficient will power to take myself out of the place promptly.

I was glad when Dr. Rand passed by Yucca this afternoon, for I had been moving a heap of stuff around, trying to straighten out a tangle that got entirely out of hand when I had to move mountains of the boy friend's things a few months back when the house was being jacked up. They, with the vast assortment of odds and ends from the big house, - treasures that otherwise would have been cast into the fire, made a "mare's nest" of things, and while I am glad to have effected a little order out of the chaos, I don't seem to be too satisfied with the day's labors.

The belt, with its silver trappings, as mentioned in the harness enclosure, arrived today. It is altogether elegant and the belt to short to buckle comfortably. The splendid tulle work on the leather is much along the lines of the one the Austin people sent, and so by sharing this latest arrival with one of my negro friends, who will adore it, I shall be able to "eat my cake and have it, too".

3615

I showed the item to Peter Battiste this noon and pointed out the initials. He asked me how to say his initials, and when he heard them, - P.B.-he gazed at the F. M. and asked if people really had to read, couldn't they easily enough make the F. M. read P. B. -- I told him I thought they could.

I had fun trying to think of some mulattoes or negroes who might have identical initials with mine. There are millions of Metoyers, of course, but only one with F for the first initial, - Felix, - and he has moved away. Then I thought of Mathew Conde (sometimes currently spelled "Conday") and concluded the lettering would just suit him, for everyone calls him Fat Mat. But on second thought, I had to let him out, so to speak, for, as his nickname suggests, his girth is far greater than mine, and so the letters will simply have to be interpreted as purely decorative, and let the thing hold up any pair of pants passing this way.

I have been thinking between jumps today of what a nice little story one could stir up about a negro sold on a lottery basis. I should think two ardent Boston Abolitionist ladies might journey down to New Orleans to carry their mission of manumission into the heart of enemy territory. Perhaps one of the lady's attractions and simplicity intrigues a Mississippi planter to propose to her, and she elopes with him, being forced to "borrow" the funds with the two Bostonians brought with them to carry out their mission. This leaves the other with but a dollar to her name, in a strange and unfriendly city, and in desperation, she places the last dollar on a lottery ticket, assuming the prize to be a cash award. Picture her surprise and delight when she holds the lucky number, but contemplate her predicament when she discovers the winning ticket begets her a likely negro slave instead of the money.

I have only two or three more letters to write tonight, so the hour for ice tea isn't so far in the offing. How much fun it would be if we might clink glasses the while and speculate on how the lucky lady solved her problem. Obviously her code of ethics wouldn't permit her to sell the man. Having no money, she couldn't afford to provide for his food and clothing and she would have no place to house him. Necessity and starvation made it imperative she get money immediately, and yet possession of a slave presupposed the owner to be responsible for him. Wouldn't we have fun untangling that one.

When I walked with Dr. Rand to the gate this afternoon around 5, I noticed an imposing battery of parked cars in the yard next door, so I take it that in numbers, at least, the party was a success. I contributed 4 or 5 dozen xx newly unfolded gardenias which I delivered at 6:30 this morning, thankful to God that I didn't have to be mixed up in the afternoon poker and small talk. How satisfying satisfaction really is.....

3616

Thursday, May 26th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Hot and dry. And Yucca has the most curious atmosphere tonight, - the combination, - if you can imagine it, - of honeysuckle, magnolias, gardenias and D. D. T.

Just before day, I contrived a bumper bouquet of a dozen or fifteen great magnolias, in a huge silver jar, looking, when assembled, like a vast collection of thunder heads. With the gardenias now in full bloom, I couldn't resist placing half a dozen bouquets in the boudoir and living room, while inundating the fences at the West end of the house are torrents of honeysuckle whose fragrance is wafted this way by a soft, vagrant breeze.

On returning from Arenbourg a little before 9 this morning, I found a couple of masked men, armed with tanks slung over their backs and wands of office in their hands, spraying the front and back galleries for all they were worth. They told me they had telephoned J. H. on Monday to let him know they would be here early today, but he, of course, had forgotten to mention it to anyone, and so no one was prepared. Usually I take down the portraits and move all the furniture into the garden, covering the immovables with towels and newspapers. But there was no time for this today, and so I merely let them concentrate heavily on the galleries with just a suggestion of a spray in the bathroom and in each of the four fireplaces. The D. D. T. tends to leave a white-ish film on mahogany and paintings, and so I just let the inside of the house slide, save the fireplaces. I have always been convinced that if the galleries are well sprayed, there will be little chance for insects to get into the house, and this year I shall have an opportunity to find out if I am xxxxx right or wrong in this assumption.

I had intended going to a funeral at St. Mathew's this morning, but the D. D. T. program forced me to change my plans. For a number of years, Rodney Payne, a negro of Little River, had been my barber, and I knew his brother fairly well, - a huge black negro who moved to Alexandria a few years ago.

He worked for a wholesale grocery firm in Alexandria, distributing groceries over a radius of some 75 miles. Yesterday he was riding in the second section of the huge delivery truck when approaching the Red River bridge at Grand Ecure over Red River. I guess it was day before yesterday, come to think of it. Somehow

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the trailer section of the outfit unhooked just as it entered upon the bridge and the trailer and Louis Payne were both catapulted into the river, perhaps 50 feet below the bridge. The current is swift at this point and the whirlpools vicious. And so poor Louis drowned there within sight of scores of people on the bridge, and his body, pulled under, disappeared from sight. Twenty four hours later it was found by a cruising airplane, some 6 or 7 miles below Grand Core, in the neighborhood of Montgomery. Dr. Knipmayer told me the matter was reported to him late at night, - the finding of the body, - with a request that he issue a burial certificate immediately, since the gars, turtles and whatnot, had so disposed of the corpse that there was no chance of embalming it and burial must be effected immediately.

According to my radio, the June McCall's is out, and a brief review was given of the first installment of "Madam Roosevelt's Memoirs of the White House Years." Well can I imagine how impatient you are to get to the nearest news stand and what efforts you will be making to grab off a few moments to run through the piece.

My radio says, too, that some Congressional committee is having another "go" at David Willenthal, which, seeming to have become an almost semi-annual affair, - almost ceases to be news. Somehow, and without knowing anything about the matter, I am under the impression the Chairman of the Atom Commission must be alright. I guess I base my prejudice in his favor on the fact that F. D. R. found him satisfactory, that everyone agrees T. V. A. is among the sweller jobs, and the Senators are always gunning for him, pushed, I suspect, in a large measure, by private power interests who will never forgive F. D. R. for clipping their wings a little, and David Willenthal, because he saw eye to eye with the President and never gave the big shots an opportunity to skim off all the financial cream of the utilities for their own private profit.

Napoleon Bonaparte Carter of the Melrose garage worked on the Manhattan project during the war, and afterwards had something to do with the T. V. A. business in some minor capacity. I must eventually stroll by the garage and see what "the man in the street" has by way of opinion regarding all this business.

From the enclosure, you will gather that Dora is in a frivolous mood. I like that, for it seems to testify to the fact that in spite of all the rain and high winds Norman has been getting, his spirit hasn't been dampened by the deluge.

But I am turning back the pilgrims instead of giving them the salt grains to count, and a flock of maidens from the college in town appeared twice today. I chatted with them momentarily at the gate, and after discovering they had never heard of the mulatto civilization in these parts, had never heard of either Mr. Baron or Mr. Kane, and so I concluded that if they had escaped all this during their past four years in the neighborhood, they wouldn't miss much if they staggered on through life without cluttering up their minds with it at this late date. Don you think so.....

3618

Friday, May 27th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Hot and dry.

And only the calendar prevents me from dating this letter Saturday, instead of Friday, for along this bend of Cane River there is every suggestion that the week end has actually arrived.

Some alteration of the movie schedule this week, - based on various frolics at St. Matthew's School where nightly graduations have been in progress, we find ourselves confronted by two movies, two parties and one wedding, and if that doesn't convert Friday night into a Saturday night brawl, then nothing ever will.

At Sammy Balthazar's the movie begins about 8 o'clock, while at the Melrose Social Club it begins at 9, with the two parties following in good time, and the wedding after that.

As for the wedding, it is in the nature of a scandal, for a mulatto, - one August Rachel, is marrying a negress, so far as coloring goes, one Maggie Morin. Maggie, who was actually christened Magazine, has a full negress for a mother and a mulatto, but discredited one, - a Morin, for a papa. The two boys of the union turned out light-light, while the girl turned out as black as her mama, and I mean but dark.

The negroes wont attend the frolic attendant upon the nuptials because they don't like the mulattoes, while the mulattoes, feeling so superior to the negroes, wont attend either. And so the end result will be that everyone will make a round of the honkey tonks until the wet groceries have blotted out the finer distinctions as to color and social status, whereupon the bride, already four months in pregnancy, will along about midnight blossom forth as the belle of the ball, and a grand time will probably be had by everyone.

This hot weather seems to be making me sleepy earlier than usual, and what with the longer days playing hob with the remote radio stations, I seem to be inclining less and less toward ether programs and more and more toward my reading machine. I suspect I am getting as much sleep as usual, but probably am merely devoting more time at 9 p.m. to reading, for I am in the midst of Mr. Adams' personal opinion of President Grant, and I am

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finding the reading pretty good. It would be difficult to run across two American minds more unlike than Mr. Adams' and Mr. Grant's, I reckon. I suppose General Grant may have left some Memoires but I am perfectly certain that he never thought of Henry Adams, - or probably any of the Adamses, when he took secretary in hand to put down what he remembered.

I believe the twin houses, built by John Hay and his friend, Henry Adams, still stand on Lafayette Square across from the White House. The next time one finds him or herself in that neighborhood, a glance ought to be cast in the Hay-Adams direction, don't you think.

Dan was in New Orleans on Wednesday night and Thursday, buying furniture for his new house in town. At supper tonight, he told me he had found everything he wanted and that the plunder had already arrived in Natchitoches by train, - which, in consideration of the 300 miles between the oldest and the lowest city in Louisiana, the delivery seems to have been made ever so promptly. Macy or Bamberger might do as well between New York and Buffalo, but I certainly wouldn't count on it, - or the Louisiana equivocal either, for that matter.

There is nothing especial about the enclosure, but it may throw a couple of side lights on what is stirring in the literary world, as reflected from Little Rock. I shall always be sorry her manuscript on the Dowager Empress of China didn't see print, for I think it had some very worth while and interesting material. I have no idea, of course, what the present manuscript may be about. While the little doctor was here, we talked at some length about her doing a book to be entitled "Night Nurse" or "Night Duty" or some such, in which in her capacity as resident physician of a hospital during the night hours, she would devote one chapter each to discussing ten or twelve individual cases coming to her particular attention, with each chapter suggesting the life of the individual up to the time he or she reached the doctor's attention in the hospital, after which some popular discussion of one malady might be speculated upon through the medium of each respective patient. The story, of course, would merely be the thread on which the various aspects of treatment of diseases would be discussed. High blood pressure ought to enchant those who enjoy that phase of poor health, rheumatism, child birth and the Lord knows what all would come in for a going-over, but done sympathetically, and with a view to clarifying many of the points which physicians too frequently tend to hush-hush, in order that their patients may be the more mystified and terrified, both by the physician and his ultimate bill..... I still think the idea has possibilities for popular appeal, and I shall be interested to learn eventually, if it ever struck the little lady as worth her efforts.....

3620

Sunday, May 29th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Slightly on the less heated side, and withal deliciously damp.

On Saturday about noon a fine drizzle developed at long last, and maintained a heavy mist all afternoon. It was enchanting. And then last night about 11 a good shower contributed further to the pleasant prospect. Surely the mimosas at Arenbourg must be gangling all over the place by now.

The enclosure, under the Thursday date line, reached me Saturday morning, and I ran through it at first dark on Saturday night, a couple of hours after the people mentioned in the letter had come and gone.

Robina had sent a telegram Saturday morning, however, so I was not taken by surprise. We had a very pleasant sitting, as between 3 and 5, - Robina, Nat Allen, Tommy and the lady and gentleman from Detroit. Of course Robina was perfectly right in saying before hand that such an assembly doesn't lend itself for individual confidences, but I reckon she was justified in making the most of the car, headed in this direction, and I was certainly glad to see her.

I must have been ever so sleepy on Saturday night, for although the day was fairly busy, I couldn't have been so tired as to warrant me, as I actually did, in going to bed at 6 p.m. and sleeping slap through with but a single brief interruption, until 6 this morning.

Naturally I felt groggy enough after so much "shut-eye", and so was dull enough for the balance of the day. Dr. Rand and Mattie both arrived at my door at noon, announcing dinner. It goes without saying that I accept the Rand invitation, although I must confess if temporary impulse had been the single deciding factor, I should have accepted Mattie's. We dined abundantly on the gallery above the water but I was home again by 3:30, pleased at having had the outing but entranced to be back home alone.

By some miracle, rare in these parts on Sunday, I was able to knock off half a dozen letters and actually read a couple of pages on Adams' Education without an interruption. When the tap finally came, it was Celeste, asking me to have coffee with her and Madam Regard, which I did. She asked me to join her in going swimming at the Rand Camp, but having graced their board but a few hours before, I thought I would leave the out-board for others.

Celeste tells me she is going into town early tomorrow to have a nail removed from one of her fingers. Some kind of a growth seems

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to require it, but I don't understand any of it, and so of course asked no questions. Her excuse for going swimming today was the fact that the removal of the nail would probably prevent her going into the river again for a month or so, and by then the water would be too hot. I still didn't understand any of the business and so merely replied dumbly with an "Oh."

Perhaps the Adams book more than any other I have re-read in recent years impresses me with the seasonal nature of the mind,-- the hopelessness of expecting all the seeds of thought planted over the period required for reading the volume from ever taking root, so that when one re-ploughs the mental furrows at subsequent sittings and in differing mental atmospheres, seeds that had remained dormant at the first or second sowing, suddenly germinate and come into flower at a second or third harrowing. Ideas that on earlier readings expanded into extensive fields somehow seem to contract into sedate spaces at this later reading while at the same time paragraphs and perhaps even pages now being gone over seem to be flourishing with speculation where formerly mere rows denoted the form of the work as a whole.

I suppose adventures in life and in reading between companionship periods with the volume contribute to the expansion and contraction of the various parts of the work. I suppose the same is true in all the other branches of Art, music, painting, poetry and so on, and at the same time the alteration of the layman's sense of values probably goes far in determining the importance and interest of one feature or another in the artist's work, as varied emotions, like Northern Lights, glow, fade out and glow again in slightly different positions, as our own sensations and senses of values change with the years.

Assuming artists like El Greco or Henry Adams could maintain the same artistic level over a 25 year period, wouldn't it be interesting to see how the most Spanish of the Spanish painters, albeit it not of Spanish blood, would have done something like Storm Over Toledo with a quarter of a century between times, or Adams, so "un-Bostonian" in spite of his long line of Massachusetts ancestry, might have turned out the Education. I shall hazard no guess on what the Metropolitan masterpiece might have been like on the second go-round, but I am wondering if Mr. Adams would have so completely eliminated reference to sex and marriage in his second attempt, assuming that such matters must be major points in most people's education.

Yesterday the Dark Duke came to see me. Like the rest of the residents of Little River, his prospects for a bumper cotton crop seem dubious. But a gleam of light breaks through his clouded horizon in the form of a \$90.00 a month allotment, enabling him to go to school evenings 5 times a week. He spoke a little of murder in self defence at Modena and next week I am hoping to have him dictate at length from those exciting days. His brother, - Peter, - dropped by and the three of us laughed heartily when inadvertently a dagger slipped out of Peter's pocket. Olivier and Maybelle must still be in Peter's mind...

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Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter of Wednesday in today's post.

I take Underwood in hand at 8 p.m., assuming that my "Secretary" and assistant "Secretary" must both have got lost in the gloaming, for neither has shown up as yet, - but one never knows. In the mean time, the Wednesday epistle is locked away in my armoire, and if we can chat tonight that will be grand, and if not, then tomorrow will be the happier for the promise of felicity awaiting me through its medium.

This morning about 8, as I was entering the West side of the White Garden, I saw the bamboos to the North divide and the Dark Duke step forth. He was just up from Little River, having come to see his sister, Alee of Alexandria, who has been spending the week end with Puny and Helma. But the Dark Duke explained that he had to stop of to tell me a story "about niggers", which he thought was real good, "speaking of us-es black folks".

Here is the story:

Some monkeys were having a frolic in a sand pile, dumped along the road by a construction gang. The monkeys were so busy, chasing each other about and rolling over and over in the sand, that they never stopped playing when an automobile, filled with white people, came along side, stopped for a few minutes to watch the monkeys play, and then drove on. A few minutes later another car came along, filled with negroes. They were hell-bent on getting no place in particular but driving like mad, and, without slowing down in the slightest, tore through the monkeys at play, killing all of the animals save one, who finally picked himself up, and glancing at the disappearing car full of negroes, remarked to himself:

"Just what I thought!!!!!! Some of our own people."

Together we sat for a few minutes in the shade, having a quick cigarette and laughing further as long speculated on the harum-scarum ways of negroes, once they find themselves foot loose and fancy free behind the wheel of an automobile, and longer would have I gladly listened if I hadn't had to get on with a bath and the mail, and so get things to moving about a rose.

I never did see Celeste today, although she returned from the hospital this afternoon. But I had pilgrims, - one or two nice

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but hopelessly bogged down by dumb ones in the same party. We affixed a new "No Admittance" sign on the front gate this evening. Perhaps that will slow things up a little, although the usual net result is that nice people respect it and drive one while the numb-skulls disdain looking at it and barge right past.

Ora Williams (Mrs. R. B. Williams) came down from town in the afternoon with a view to reading me from the new McCall's, but the advent of the pilgrims knocked that venture in the head. Perhaps we shall have better luck at another sitting. In speaking of Mrs. Roosevelt, she told me an interesting little sidelight, of which, I suppose, hundreds, if not thousands, might be discovered, were it possible for one to search them out.

It seems that early in the depression days of the first Roosevelt Administration, a colored woman with a family who had labored many a year with a hope of securing a home of her own, came to Ora's husband, - a lawyer, - explaining that due to some temporary lack of funds, she was unable to meet one installment on the home she had purchased, and was on the point of losing it, and asked him if he couldn't contact the proper Federal agency to stave off the foreclosure.

R. B. set to work and made petitions and appeals to a whole flock of agencies, both Parish, State and Federal, but somehow the appeal always got bogged down and the day of the foreclosure was upon them. As a last resort, he hit upon one final thought. He had his secretary take a letter, explaining the details, and after it was typed, had the colored woman copy the letter in long hand on her own plain stationery, and posted it to the First Lady at the White House.

Promptly an acknowledgement came back from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, signed by the Mistress of the White House, and a few days later all the red tape which had come so close to strangling the poor old colored woman's savings had been cut, - and she retained her property, and since that day, naturally, has never lost an opportunity to bless the one person in the nation who seemed able to bringing order out of chaos and the deed to the property in to the rightful hands.

At Arenbourg everything looks as pert as a penguin on a new found ice floe, while the cotton fields look as though their rows had jumped a couple of inches over the week end. At supper tonight, J. A. told me that Teddy Baranowsky reported that there hadn't been enough rain on Little River to permit the cotton to break through the crust of clay soil where it was planted three weeks ago.

Peter passed by Yucca about first dark and told me that Mr. Ted had just told him he was leaving Melrose employ tonight. I am wondering why J. A. didn't mention it at supper, having quoted him on cotton. I must get my grapevine to operating a little.....

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Tuesday, May 21st, 1949.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your grand letter, which awaited me until this evening, after spending the past 24 hours in the armoir, - the letter, not!

What with quite a few piece of long hand mail to hand, I ran a little short of time and so have retained the quotation from Mrs. Roosevelt's article until tomorrow's sitting, so that tonight, even as last night, guarantees continued pleasures on the morrow.

A sample of the difficulties encountered in attempting to read certain types of long hand may be cited from the enclosure. I guess at the contents, - something about having an extraction, I take it, and inquiry as to Pury's status. It is worth noting that this letter was penned in Watchitoches on Wednesday last past, which would indicate it has taken a leisurely jaunt in making the 15 mile trip between there and here by the following Tuesday.

I am so glad to have such pleasant news about you and the girl friend. How nice that the business step-up should occur in the neighborhood of the 21st, to add its element to the gaiety of the day, and how nice that you should have discovered some Concord wine of the Taylor variety. The Finger Lakes must be giving California a run for its money in this section, for on Saturday Robina brought a bottle of Taylor's Cherry which was also excellent.

While I think of it, I shall respond to your inquiry about the final will Mr. Bachelier executed. It was the one supervised by his spiritual adviser, and as soon as it had been properly drawn up, the Reverend Father descended on Mr. Bachelier's residence on Little River, removing all papers from the house, so that whatever previous wills or private papers were there passed automatically into the hands of the new executor who, either before or after Mr. Bachelier's death, I am quite certain, took care to cull them with care.

With no copy of the will drawn up last summer available, it would be futile for me to attempt breaking the present one, since, were I successful, the estate would automatically go to Mr. Bachelier's next of kin, - a niece and nephew living in France, whom he had already settled his property in France on during his life time, thus leaving his American holdings, as was supposed, for my benefit.

Yesterday Ora mentioned the matter again, saying her husband, as a lawyer, had been interested one day last week when some of Mr. Bachelier's former acquaintances in town had spoken with R. B. Williams,

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telling him that they proposed going to Father Becker to ask him to respect Mr. Bachelier's final wishes in my favor, as they had heard him mention me in reference to a bequest so often during the past couple of years. But that, as the Madam would inelegantly express it, will be "singing Psalms to a dead mule".

And so that matter is but definitely closed.

Isn't it grand your little Venezuelan friend is going to have such a grand tour this summer. What a flurry in the chicken coop if by chance, as have others inadvertently, side tracked in their Northward course, quitting the Mississippi temporarily at Baton Rouge, and striking back at it again at Natchez, thus finding themselves in the forgotten Cane River country. Should such an unexpected thing eventuate, you may be sure I shall bat not the vaguest eyebrow in recognition.

And thanks for telling me of the recording being made of the Roosevelt-Hopkins volume. Curiously enough, I had been thinking of that particular volume just before reading your letter, for I had run across a picture of Madam R., and so fell to hoping her new volume would be recorded promptly and that the one you mentioned would follow suit. If the recording will require 80 records, that will bring it up to 4 or 5 cartons, each containing from 14 to 20 records, which, if memory serves, is about the extent of Tolstoy's War and Peace, - a book, by the way, I am bound to re-read before long.

I found myself thinking about Leon Tolstoy the other day, wondering if he and Henry Adams ever maintained a friendship, either by correspondence or by personal contact. When Henry Adams was his father's secretary in the London Embassy in 1861-1867, Tolstoy must have been living in the Moscow area and when Mr. Adams was in Russia along about 1903 or 1904, Mr. T. must have been living on his estate in the country. I used to enjoy hearing Brander Mathews talk about the good old days when he and the great Russian were "playthings" together, but I can't seem to recall his mention of Mr. Adams, although he may have.

It is interesting that Henry Adams never did seem to think much about Darwin's Theory of Evolution, that is to say, didn't think of it very favorably. He had known Mr. Darwin's chief promoter, Dr. Lisle or Lyle, - I know not how it is spelled, and had even written a forward to the Lisle volume setting forth the Darwin ideas on natural selection, the development of the various species, etc., but in spite of all this could never bring himself to see how there ever was any real evidence that anybody ever evolved from anything, save the very mould by which we know things of today, - the former moulds having been discarded with the extinction of the types that Darwin would like to have us believe we descended from.

The weather is in the 90's with much sun, and much growth of vegetation since Saturday's rain, and Arenbourg is astir in every gangling twig.....

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Wednesday, June 1st, 1949.

Memorandum:

That fanciful fellow, the Weather Man, promised us clouds and widely scattered showers for today, but all we got was sunshine and heat.

Had impulse been my only guide, I guess I might have remained behind the earthen walls of Yucca all day, following my retrun from Arenbourg early this morning. But impulse is one thing and pilgrims are something else again, and the latter triumphed, both in the morning and afternoon.

Fortunately the pilgrims were intelligent and that tended to keep the thermometer down a little, for dumb ones tend to run up thermometer readings, even in the "inter. Some people in the morning were from Claremore, Oklahoma and they spoke in some detail of the late Will Rogers. The latter's father and the father of one of the lady pilgrims had been jointly interested in a bank in Claremore. I was sorry the approach of dinner time impelled me to shorten the tour somewhat, for while the pilgrims were getting a fair share of information out of me, I was getting much more out of them, - and I guess that is probably why I found them above the average, who, it must be said, are too often incapable of giving any information or receiving any.

They, it is, I guess, who puzzle me so much, for I can never understand how people with no wish to learn anything about old Louisiana plantations or have anything to tell on their own hook about other places, can still find energy, - the thermometer in the mid 90's, - to chase up and down the road, apparently in pursuit of nothing. Were I in their shoes, a perch in the shade, a tall drink in one hand and a palm leaf fan in the other, would suit me ever so much better.

I was a little late in arriving at dinner, and was surprised to find Pat there. He came in this morning.

I wasn't surprised to find Teddy Baranowski's place vacant, but I asked no question. My colored grapevine has already functioned so rapidly in that direction that I might as well take time out to assimilate some of the varied reasons for his withdrawal from the Melrose staff. About tomorrow some of the white folks will give me other versions, and, as the Madam used to say: "J. H. will tell you anything crossing his mind at the moment, just so long as he wants it that way, with no regard at all for the truth."

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I am so indebted to you for having made the transcript for me of Mrs. Roosevelt's article about the national organization for pooling interests in historic landmarks throughout the country. I shall write to the Washington office, asking what societies in this area, if any, belong to the national body. I have some ideas on how the parent nucleus in Washington could co-ordinate its efforts with the sectional groups, and a census should be made by counties throughout the nation of the landmarks which merit regional and national lime light turned on them. The Historic Buildings Survey of the Department of Interior did some of this work, I believe, during W P A days, but at best it did little more than skim over the major points.

As the earliest settled plantation district in Louisiana, the Cane River country might have some claim to attention, and, of course Yucca and Melrose would undoubtedly receive a place on the listing of historic sites, since it was here the only early multi civilization in America thrived.

I think there are about three thousand counties in the United States, and if the national organization could break down their departments, - or rather build them up, to that many divisions, I can foresee much might be realized along the lines the organization is sponsoring.

From the enclosure, I gather Robina and her guests had a pleasant afternoon down this way on Saturday. Her reference to doing some typing is typically kind of her. She must be referring to some story I related to her friends. I presume I have mentioned the idea to you in the past. It is a thing requiring much conversation, in fact it would be a short story which would embrace nothing but conversation and various news broadcasts, and that sort of stuff, of course, is almost impossible to do "in the dark". I have attempted it on two or three occasions but an interruption invariably cuts me off and when I return to the work, it is impossible for me to recall the precise phraseology I have been using at the time of the break, - and without that particular current, it is impossible to piece the thing together. Perhaps later in the summer I may be able to get so one to spend the day with me, when the hoes are laid up early next month, and then we shall see.

I pushed my reading a little further last night, bringing Mr. Adams up to his 65th year at which age he is concentrating on the stained glass windows of 14th to 15th century churches in Normandy, Touraine, etc. He is still complaining because he hasn't been able to get his education, although even though he failed, quite a few people reading his account of the failure will be the better educated for having followed him along his road.....

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Thursday, June 2nd, 1949.

Memorandum:

Dull in subject matter and zig-zaggy in its coherence, - or absence of any, the enclosure probably even surpasses anything I may attempt, and so you will loose nothing if you cast both in the trash basket without reading.

How I wish I might share some of the billion gardenias that clutter up my living room and boudoir, for I have buckets of them and wouldn't miss a few hundred blossoms, were it possible to bounce them from Yucca to you.

Before sun up this morning, I ransacked half a dozen weighted bushes, filling six big shiney pails, which I distributed about in the house where the cool inside temperature usually stands at 72, as against the 95 outside. I had thought it would be nice to surprise Miss Sally with oceans of them today, so that she might decorate her alter magnificently for services tomorrow. My desk, five and talbes, two chests were graced with opulent bouquets at the same time, and everything looked promising until a messenger arrived from Dr. Knipmayer, saying he had been called to Baton Rouge where his son, - a college youth, is ill, and that he would not pass this way today. And so Miss Sally will never get her gradenias for tomorrow, but I shall be a little drunk with the heady perfume they are spreading all over this place, while passing pilgrims to whom the circumstances will not be explained will think I have completely lost my mind, and of course they may be perfectly right.

And while speaking of flowers, I must remark upon the curious interest one of my gray cats takes in floral arrangements. I am not especially fond of the animal and he never seems too crazy about me, but whenever I dump a new armful of flowers, large or small, gardenias or magnolias, it is all grist to his mill, and on the old bench from St. Augustin's original church where I usually park them before putting them in vases, the cat invariably appears from no where, and without anyone asking him for assistance, begins batting them about just as soon as I start putting them in vases. My old yellow cat who is ever so friendly and inclined to be playful at all times, never fails to take a seat along side, but sits there sedately without putting in his two cents worth until my task is completed, but not so the gray one. And even an approach to catastrophe never seems to upset him, as demonstrated yesterday when in hopping about to assist me in arranging some big magnolias in a huge copper jar.

he plunged slap in among the magnolia blossoms and gradually sank into the water beneath, - without moving an iota to stave off the ducking. For a long time I have been looking for a name for the fellow, and I guess I shall just dumb him Petunia, and let it go at that.

But if I lost out in the case of Dr. Knipmayer, I made up for it by way of the Rands. At 11:30, I received a message from the store, saying that Mrs. Rand was expecting me for lunch at 1. I accordingly hit out across the cotton fields a little before that magical hour, and dined abundantly under a cool fan on their gallery over the water. Only Mrs. Rand and a lady from Paradise, - Paradise, Louisiana, that is, and not of the terrestrial sphere. The few minutes walk across the boiling cotton patch was just the proper contrast for the food, - an iced punch, chilled avocado and cream cheese salad, sliced ham and deviled eggs, more punch, frozen strawberries lost in an avalanche of ice cream, - another round of punch, a cigarette, half an hour of after chat, and thence back home again.

I found a flock of pilgrims awaiting me on my return. It must be all the graduating going on up and down the nation that puts so many people in the road. As for myself, when it is 95 in the shade, I'm not dreaming of chasing up and down the road if I can help myself. I reckon there is a little inconsistency in hot footing it across a cotton patch at high noon, but I try to twist myself out of that by pointing to a cold luncheon under a whirling fan which really is beyond all compare when held up against the alternative of flitting from the shade of a live oak to the leaf of a fig tree.

The "Affair Baranowski" hasn't mentioned (been mentioned) by anyone in the white folks section, and I proceed on the assumption I haven't noticed his absence. The grapevine, however, is working over time, and one of the colored branches today came through with the message that the merchant-planter had told him one of the negroes had come to him on Sunday, complaining that his wife was fixing to have a mulatto baby, following a frolic with one Baranowski. The same source reports that the same merchant planter asked about the partentage of three other prospective mulattoes in negro homes. My informant expressed dumb amazement at such revelations and pled complete ignorance. It is generally supposed no bobbies are in the offing, but obviously the merchant planter thought it might be just as well to avoid impinging on the "purity" of the Metoyer claims to distinction, and so Pat's advent was used as an excuse for dispensing of the services of T. Baranowski. What put a crimp in his philandering, I guess, was the fact that he failed to concentrate on unattached females but tended to induce the wives to two-time their husbands, and at that point, - and rightly, the merchant-planter eliminated future hazards by sweeping the board clean.

Well, so things turn, and the gangling going on at Arenbourg is the business of nobody. Even as yesterday, so is rain promised for the morrow, but if it fails again, I shall begin watering the birthday magnolias on Monday. Thus far they are doing prettily.....

Friday, June 3rd, 1949. I spent a day in the

Memorandum: 1. The following information was obtained from the files of the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, regarding the land owned by the United States in the State of California:

While lunching with Mrs. Rand yesterday, I was delighted to hear her speak of the three or four sons of her daughter, Frances Rand Jack. I guess the boys range from about 6 to 10 or 12 years.

As she verbally sketched the pronounced differences in their personalities, my mind recalled the basic law of personality which I stumbled over a number of years ago, and which I may have spoken about to you in conversation.

33 In the years between, my observations have confirmed the validity of the Law, to my own satisfaction, at least, and I am wondering if you would like to have me run over the matter again.

For whatever the purpose, it appears to me that God or Nature intended in the birth of children by the same father and mother that the sex should alternate with each succeeding birth, - a boy, a girl, a boy, a girl and so on. It is understood of course that the first child might be a girl, followed by a boy, and so on, the alternation or rather alternation following in regular sequence.

One good reason for such an arrangement would be to keep the number of opposite sexes fairly well in balance.

But, as is evident to everyone, a variation develops in the succeeding births in to the same parents, so that two children of the same sex are frequently begotten. This break in the alternating sequence of the sexes, produces succeeding children of the same sex with marked differences in personality, the one being definitely on the pronounced masculine side, the other on the feminine. This suggests the basic law, although broken, is definitely felt in the personalities of the two individuals of the same sex thus brought into the world in regular succession, the one to the other.

In the case of children born in what appears to be the Divine or Natural sequence, the boys are inclined to typify the 100 per cent masculinity, the girls 100 per cent femininity.

Those born out of the seemingly normal sequence incline to embrace elements of personality found in both sexes. It was perhaps this latter type da Vinci was trying to capture in his portrait wherein he attempted to fuse into one composite picture what seemed best to him in the personalities of John, the Beloved and Mary Magdallene. Apparently the Florentine found the a proach to a balance of 50 per cent of each personality, embodies in a single individual, the ideal. Too often in the last generation,

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psychologists seem to have disdained this combination and have too frequently tried to rip out everything from the personality of a patient that didn't conform to whatever the physician considered going in to make up the 100 per cent masculine or feminine status of the patient.

Obviously vast harm could be done in attempting such an alteration of personality, and, so far as I can see, no possible good could come from such an attempt.

But it seems strange to me that in spite of what seems to me so obvious and so important in undertaking the appreciation of a personality, no writer on Psychology has ever mentioned this primary consideration, without which, it seems to me, any attempt to understand anyone save the 100 per centers would be almost futile.

In other words, am I correct in assuming that I have stumbled on an original law, or is the law so generally known and accepted that, unlike the Ten Commandments, it has never been set down.

And if, by chance, it should be original, how would be the best means to communicate it to doctors of the mind, and how best should it be popularized among laymen whose own persons and those of their children would benefit so widely by the understanding that might be derived from a general recognition of such a basic factor in society, public and private.

Nature, of course, which loves complexities, has introduced the variations in such a multiplicity of ways, has so often, through an unexpected variation, reversed the personalities in the sexes, so that in a case where but a single son and daughter are born to a man and wife, it turns out that the boy develops possessed of the finer nature while the daughter the more masculine. And sometimes when but one child is begotten, it may be a child endowed with a perfection of balance that never would have been repeated, had there been additional children.

But in observing the basic intention, - the alternation of sexes in succeeding births, isn't always easy to follow correctly, since an unknown miscarriage or the death of a child between the two we suppose to be born in immediate succession, tend to confuse the casual observer. And yet, by and large, anyone has but to contemplate half a dozen sets of children where two boys or two girls have succeeded each other in birth, and the phenomenon of differences in personality is so striking, one wonders why it has never been noticed, - or set down, before.

Sometime, should you have any ideas on the above sketch, - and it must be sketchy, what with three interruptions, - I should be so glad to have your re-action.

The weather continues to boil, and it stops pilgrims not at all. Everything is alright at Ardenbourg and may you be able to say as much for your own good self.....

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Sunday, June 5th, 1949.

Memorandum:

It doesn't seem possible, and yet, unless my memory is playing vast tricks on me, there were no pilgrims this weekend. I had better mark this down on my calendar as a high point in something or other.

But the sun was so hot, I welcomed the excuse for "staying put" from big day to first dark, and the thickness of the Yucca walls are such that the thermometer remains stationary throughout the day, and I usually close all the doors and windows at 4:30 in the morning, with the two vast chimney pieces giving ample ventilation.

Celeste dropped by this evening, asking that I come over to her house for supper. I ~~compromised~~ compromised for a cup of coffee forthwith, for I don't like to establish the custom of supping with them on Sunday nights.

She wanted to tell me about the party she and J. E. attended last night at Beaufort. I had talked on the telephone with Madam Cloutier earlier in the week, declining the invitation on my own part, and any Saturday night party, in my opinion, is best enjoyed when relayed to one on the following Sunday afternoon.

From the guests Celeste mentioned as having been present, I take it the party was made up of Matchitoches Gentry, for the most part. I conclude that the host and hostess must have thought everything through, - in preparation for this particular soiree, at least, since a few hours before night, - I suppose the party must have been about 9, - an airplane was chartered to spray the environs with D. D. T., while on the terrace the yellow non-insect bulbs were used to discourage any stray mosquito who might, through error, have escaped the airplane. You will agree that Uncle Marcisse couldn't have done better in the 1850's when little Aestan used to pass that way, - at least so far as the bugs go.

At the same time the Beaufort affair was in full progress, I believe there was some kind of a doings at Van's new house in town, but I have no particulars regarding that. Neither Pat nor J. H. nor I were bidden and I have no notion as to what social strata was on the list, - possibly business associates. I saw Van at dinner and got the impression he might have had a fairly

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hard night, but why, after the house-warming, he should have driven back home to Melrose, I cannot imagine.

Having just finished Henry Adams' *Education*, I find myself wanting to re-read James T. Adams more than ever, but in the absence of anything better at the moment, I am already re-reading certain chapters of the *Education*, and profiting thereby. Since various members of the family through at least three generations were famous for the magnitude of their respective diaries, I reckon Henry must have kept one, too, and that ought to be interesting reading, - if, indeed, he did keep one and it has ever been printed.

I have been wondering of late what in the world may ever have happened to one Carolyn Ramsey. As I recall, she was threatening to get in touch with me along about the end of March or early in April. I have been sufficiently busy not to miss her, but it does seem odd she should have vanished so completely. Perhaps she has been sent to do the Berlin air lift, - or, on her own hook, has been busy planting potatoes. There is no guessing what that gay number may be up to.

From the enclosure, I take it that Nora is in a gay mood. I am sure we both agree with him about the sincere tone prevailing Madam Roosevelt's McCall's first installment. I got a great kick out of the gay pictures appearing in the issue of life he mentions. I haven't read the text as yet, but the pictures tend to give a pretty good slant on things in the early 1899's just in themselves.

I don't seem able to rouse much interest in news broadcasts concerning the doings of the Foreign Ministers, Paris, - so much of it sounds so like the Potsdam and subsequent efforts on the part of some nations to get the recalcitrant Russians in line, - and apparently with no more success than in the past. Isn't it remarkable how so much of the world, - Scandinavia, Britain, France and the United States have made such definite steps in behalf of their average citizens so that it becomes daily more evident that long before the so-called Communist nations have even reached Socialism, the balance of the civilized world will have surpassed the Kremlin in arriving at the point the Bolsheviks are always talking about but never seem to do much about, - not, at least, - so far as their own citizens are concerned.

There's a big old moon in the zenith and what with a light breeze having sprung up, I think I shall take a leisurely little jaunt up to Arenbourg, just to see what will be next when a new day is born.....

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Monday, June 6th, 1949.
Memorandum:

It's awfully droughty, or you might say drouthy, according to the Weather Man and old Noah Webster.

Frankly, I never heard the word, "Droughty" until scanning the dictionary a while back and stumbled over the word, which, because of its strangeness to my ear, sounds ever so odd.

Along about 4 p.m., a little cloud appeared in the sky whereupon the rain frogs began croaking madly on all side, - an unfailing sign of rain, according to the negroes. But half an hour later, every thing was all blue and gold again and the brilliance of the moon at the moment suggests nothing so much as the wisdom for me to be up and toasting water to refresh the birthday magnolias at dawning.

After returning from Arenbourg last night about 10, I read for about 20 minutes when lo! all sound faded from the reading machine. I got in touch with the powers in town and this afternoon they called for the machine, hoping that a few new tubes might turn the trick and restore the human voice of the recordings. The Baton Rouge office says a new type machine is being brought out "shortly", - and that although 50 people are clamoring for one, I am slated for early delivery. When a Federal agency uses the word "shortly", I haven't the vaguest notion as to what measuring rod they use. My present machine has lasted about 4 months, I believe, while the one before functioned well for a couple of years.

I wonder if so times you have the same thrill as I when something very pleasant happens and one somehow feels the pleasure is actually being shared by another who somehow, in spite of the distance between, somehow seems present. At Arenbourg this morning, just as the sun was gilding the horizon, we had unexpected visitors. I had been cutting weeds and had parked for a moment for a restful dool, when leisurely 8 lovely big white cranes came slanting slowly over the silver surface of the river, and arriving at Uncle D'Or's cabin, rose majestically and after circling Arenbourg once, came in for a landing on the terrace about 20 feet from where I sat. I can't imagine what should have occasioned a conclave at this season of the year, for I think of such groups assembling at migration time. They strolled about a little, apparently discussed matters in a rather casual fashion, sampled a few tufts of grass, and then, after another brief conversation, took off leisurely, beautiful snowy figures against the clean blue of the morning sky, and disappeared down the river in the direction of St. Augustin's.

Somehow from the time I first sighted them until they had completed

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their visit and had departed, I almost felt as though you had been sharing the episode with me, a sensation which gave so much added value to the experience and the pleasant little ache that sometimes flits by like a shadow when we realize a day-dream in fact is at best nothing more than a promise of tomorrow, - but yet how pleasant it is to think of sharing such little vignettes of life eventually.

One doesn't see dranes on the river very often, for they seem to prefer the greater solitude of the Little River area, and perhaps the shallowness of the bayou sections of the plantation afford better facilities for feeding. As they came from the Southwest rather than the North, it couldn't have been Madam Cloutier's D. D. T. spray that had brought forth this call for a special session, and I am hoping that this year's spraying programs throughout the state do not drive all this type of bird into the Hudson Valley as seemed to be the case last year, according to your information. What I am hoping is that the Arenbourg terrace, being rather higher land than anything in the neighborhood may have offered the feathered fathers a likely spot to discuss aviary problems, and that it was selected for that reason exclusively. And while I hope their local affairs prosper, I can't help wishing that conclaves will be in order frequently, and that Arenbourg may always be selected as the place for their Congressional matins.

I heard two brackets of grants of public money to students today that varied widely in the wisdom of expenditure. Mrs. Coombs, who picked up my reading machine, was delighted that she had today succeeded in securing sufficient funds from a joint State-Federal source to enable some Natchitoches girl to further her education. The girl was born out of wedlock and has lived with a no-account mother when not employed as a boone a tous faire in various households. She graduated from high school this last month but was at the end of her resources. The grant just secured will enable her to take one year at college, all expenses paid, and as she wants to become a nurse, the grant also carries with it the right to take a two year's training course in any one of four large hospitals in New Orleans, following her year in college. If the girl was any happier over the allotment than Mrs. Coombs, then two town ladies tonight are in transports.

The other case has to do with "scholarships" at L. S. U. Pat told me he thought everyone of the 150 youths in the law course receive a monthly stipend from the State under the title of "Scholarship". I am under the impression these amount to about \$80.00 months, and are nothing more or less than gravy, dished out by politicians, as a means, I suppose, of influencing widely spread voting groups. It smacks of the old Huey P. Long chicanery which certainly must be flourishing mightily in certain quarters, now that the Longs are in the saddle again. One can't help speculating on just how much real charity in the case of the girl costs when the flim-flam charges of the law students is added to it as an excuse for existing.....

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Tuesday, June 7th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Your elegant letter to hand, together with the fascinating tubes for the humming birds. I am enchanted with both and while the little feathered friends won't get to first base with the typed pages, they will no doubt call down many a blessing on you for the tubes long before June has waned.

How kind of you to think of us in such a delightful manner, and how often we shall feel your presence as we all hover about the butterfly lilies from here on out.

And it was so kind of you to advise me regarding the use of honey rather than sugared water. I am wondering if one uses unadulterated strained honey or if one reduces its substance by adding a measure of water. I shall start off with the unadulterated first, and if that seems a little thick, I shall stir the honey in some boiling water to reduce its stickiness a little. I wonder if the humming birds won't get a delightful surprise when they suddenly discover that they can feed on two different flavors in such close proximity to the same flowers.

I know I am going to have a heap of fun tinkering with these little contraptions and you may depend on receiving endless reports from time to time.

I am so sorry to learn of the cloud that has been hanging over the apartment close to your own. Poor L. J., such noble shoulders to have to bear such heavy burdens. I have followed the shock treatment with considerable interest during the past year. Miss Sally's son-in-law, Dr. Holbrook, is considered one of the leading authorities in such matters in the South, and I hear confidential reports on such matters through this personal contact, - as viewed from the psychiatrist's angle. Then, too, the General's sister-in-law has two or three times taken the shock treatments in New Orleans during the past year or so. The fact that she has found it necessary to return after a period of 6 months or so indicates that sometimes there is something left wanting in the completeness of the cure, at least so far as the first go-round is concerned. The fact that difficulties are eliminated for a time at least is a hopeful sign, and, depending upon the circumstances inducing the mental illness, the completeness of the cure depends in a large part, as I understand it. Let us hope that the current case is among the simpler and that one series of treatments will suffice. In this area, such treatments are usually very expensive but I am hoping this may be a circumstance prevailing in the Gulf region exclusively.

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Your week end certainly turned out quite differently than anticipated, so far as Decoration Day went. Something tells me that fishing did not exert the same pull on your guest as it tends to do with others.

And how nice of you to give me particulars about what had happened to real estate in the 7th Avenue South section. I had supposed the property would have given way to a City Service or Esso station long before this, and am frankly surprised to learn that the old edifice still stands, even though the geraniums and gay curtains have long since departed. I never did spend much time in attempting to trace back the history of the building, but from prefatory inquiry, I learned it had been an inn or tavern in colonial days, a stopping point for coaches bearing travelers to and from little old New York when that metropolis for the most part lay South of Wall Street which, as you know, used to be not a street but a barricade against Indians who ranged way up North where eventually Aaron Burr was to build his country estate of Richmond and later a remote hamlet was to spring up, to be known as Greenwich Village. In those days, of course, Cherry Lane was simply a lane of cherry trees while Grove Street, immune from asphalt, was simply a grove and neither Varick nor 7th Avenue had been dreamed of and Bleeker was intersected by nothing more than a meandering cow or a stray cow. No, I must say I am not astonished that the geraniums have faded from view but that the old tavern itself should have survived so far down into the 20th century. I have a snapshot in a scrapbook, taken about 1936, which we shall have to compare with the neighborhood itself eventually, don't you think.

And may I thank you, too, for the copy of McCall's which arrived in this morning's post. I am so glad to have this copy which certainly does well by the first lady of the world. The portrait on the cover is certainly grand and I find the illustrations in the article ever so enchanting. It's going to be nice saving this issue and like millions of other readers, I am going to be impatient until the next installment unfolds.

I crowed too soon about Good Fortune staving off pilgrims, for ever since I penned that line, it seems as though we have had more than usual. Fortunately, for the most part, they haven't been too dumb. More are scheduled for the morrow, and I believe we have to entertain some of Payne's Ohio friends on Thursday, along with the probable daily allotment of unexpected numbers.

After carrying off my Reading Machine yesterday, Mrs. Coombs went straight to a radio shop and had new tubes put in the thing, and this afternoon drove back down from town with it, asking me to accept the tubes as a birthday gift she had neglected to do something about four weeks back. I thought the hauling, promptness and generosity on her part was touching, and I shall say as much in a note I shall write tonight before continuing the Adams Education re-read, - and the up-setting of ice tea.

The mail was so good today, your letter, your McCall's, your humming bird tubes. Is it any wonder I

'm as happy as a

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Wednesday, June 8th, 1949.

Memorandum:

First off, we might refer to the enclosures, since photographs in any letter are likely to catch the eye first.

The big house speaks for itself. And you will recognize Yucca in the other. It seems to me Mrs. Barnes doesn't stand forth very clearly. The picture was taken in mid March, and the trash you see along the front gallery is what is left of last year's banas. At this writing, they have again hung out their green curtain and are about 8 or 10 feet high. I looked for my old yellow cat in the picture, but can't find him, although Peter tells me he can see little Grandpa, who now has four kittens, and that she is sitting on the door step. This picture of Yucca is the Southern exposure, while the Wydam illustration in the Gilmore volume is the Northern, giving on the White Garden.

As for the Barnes letter, it is as friendly as ever. In responding, I shall tell him he is quite right about the wisdom of writing the "ottery thing as soon as possible, but I shall add that John Milton was smarter than I, since he provided himself with daughters to act as secretaries to get down his stuff, whereas if I get a tractor driver to stick with me long enough to run through personal correspondence, I am lucky.

And in the accompanying envelope, I am enclosing an article from the Times Picayune about Bill Spratling and his present Mexican activities. I have not read the article and so I may jot down a couple of points covered in it. Additional particulars regarding this article came to hand today when the Rands invited me to lunch with them at Natalie Scott, the invitation arriving just as I was finishing dinner at Helrose.

But of course I went over a little later for a salad and pie and coffee, and some excellent conversation, especially with Dr. Rand and Natalie, while Mrs. Rand and Zelma were dashing about in the culinary department.

You may recall that Natalie lives in the Mexican town appearing in the article. As regards the full page picture, she mentioned several details of interest. The Church is built on a sidehill, the rear being several stories below the level of the front of the building, shown in this picture. Opposite the Church, - to the left of the picture, and at the end of the square, - but not appearing herein, stands the Governor's palace. It is two stories high facing the square, and six stories at the rear, for the land falls off again, at that end of the esplanade, too. The Church and palace were built in 1757.

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Digging an emplacement for any building, even as in Manhattan, one has to contend with solid rock on which the city is built. The proximity of one building to another prevents the use of dynamite, and to excavate, the workman build huge fires on the rock surface, and when the stone gets hot-hot, cold water is dashed on it, with the sudden expansion and contraction causing a crack to develop, after which the men take their picks and go to work.

As for the article, forgive me if I repeat what already appears, but I suppose some of these following particulars do not. For example, Bill had agreed with the Federal Government to go to Alaska to develop Eskimo arts and crafts. Before starting, he had to consult a dentist who told him three teeth needed extracting and some fillings were necessary. Bill abruptly ordered all his teeth removed, and this delayed his original plans.

Arriving in Alaska, where everyone, including the contracting parties, had assumed Bill would remain indefinitely, the locality appealed to the traveler not at all, and forthwith he sold an novel idea to the Governor of Alaska, who was acting as agent for the Department of Interior, that the youths from the Arctic circle could advance ever so much more quickly and to greater benefit to their art if they were permitted to study the methods used by the Mexicans in their handicraft. He apparently was a convincing salesman, and the thing was effected.

Most of the Eskimo boys selected had been in the Army and so knew a little English. I didn't know before the Draft Board had extended its long arm that far. Be that as it may, they all folded up their fur union suits, provided themselves with tropical garments, and the whole shooting match headed out for Mexico, - and hence the satisfaction of Mr. Spratling, not only in satisfying his wish to get back home, but also in thus acquiring financial support of consequence, and the publicity, - a part of which is evidenced from this article.

One more point, and then I am done:-It inclines to be chilly in altitudes such as on the Equator or in sub-tropical Mexico, regardless of the position on the face of the globe, just so long as altitudes obtain at a given spot. And the Eskimo boys were certainly one the spot, for there in their tropical garments, these inhabitants of the Arctic Circle found themselves freezing hundreds of miles South of the Rio Grande.

On the home front the best news I know concerns the weather, for it rained a nice little shower this afternoon. It is St. Medar or St. Swithins Day, and rain today means 40 days of it, according to everyone except the keeper of records. But I am delighted with today's shower, and shall continue to hold the thought, for 40 days to come. Don't you know the Arenbourg children are feeling mighty contented tonight, what with such an unexpected drink from on high.....

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Thursday, June 9th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The enclosure is so unexpected in one detail, I shall refer to it first. Who in the world would ever have supposed Sister would be interested in reading anything; and secondly, what in the world, were she actually to read it, would happen to her already addled brain. But such speculations are of no importance, for, after all, you hold the Journal, and something tells me it isn't likely to pass to her hands too soon.

I can't help but laugh, too, at the suggestion that I travel a hundred miles Northward to Cherevoport with a view, as she suggests, that from there, we head out on a 300 mile jaunt Southward or Eastward. What a bag.....

I may have mentioned we expected some of Faynie's friends from Ohio to be here today for dinner, but they didn't come. Faynie had a telephone from Ohio, saying that the man, his wife and 9 year old daughter, had driven by car in this general direction as far as St. Louis. There they had their car parked at the hotel and were out shopping when, in crossing a street on foot, two other cars came together in such a fashion as to fracture the skull of the little girl, pulverize the ankle of the man and generally knocked the wife about in such a way that she will have to be in a cast until next February at least. And so, instead of maintaining their schedule to be at Elrose today, the three of them were being flown back to Ohio by ambulance plane.

And while on the harrowing side of things, - this sounds something like Sister, - I really thought I was up a tree yesterday while at luncheon with the Rands. I had crossed the boiling cotton fields to reach their camp just as they were about to have a go at nourishment. My place, - all adrip though I was, fell slap beneath a ceiling fan that gave a wonderfully cool breeze. I let the main piece of resistance pass by, but was entranced at a fat crab meat salad, fixed up with all sorts of elegant things in the avocado-tomato-heaven knows what line. Without glancing at what I was acquiring at the first stab of my fork, I imagine I brought forth a small tomato, about the size of a large marble, or a shade smaller than a golf ball. Just as I raised it to my lips, discovering I would put it back to cut in two, the breeze from the fan caused me to sneeze, and as I suddenly drew in my breath, I was astonished to discover that the firm ball had somehow jumped right down my throat, seemingly to about the point where the neck joins the torso. Nobody at table apparently noticed the circumstance, and I at least tried to listen attentively to what was going on at the moment although I was conscious that my windpipe, as well as my throat, was

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pressed out of commission by the round object lodged in my throat. Instinctively I picked up a glass of punch and took a sip, with a view to washing the object down, but to my surprise, the liquid wouldn't pass, and automatically mounted to my nasal passages. I quietly left the table and went outside, kneeling down close to the camp where no one would see me. I inserted my finger miles down my throat, but the object was way beyond the length of my finger. Then everything went black and I must have pitched forward, and the accompanying paroxysm somehow squeezed the thing down. A second later, I picked myself up and after brushing off the dust, returned to the table, apologizing for the sudden interlude and putting the sudden withdrawal on faulty bridgework which unexpectedly required attention. I had a splitting headache the balance of the day, but this morning I felt as fit as a fiddle and none the worse for my gourmandizing.

This morning I saw Celeste for the first time in two or three days. Thinking you wouldn't mind, I took her one of the little humming bird feeding tubes, remarking that you had sent one to each of us, enclosing them both in the same package. She was perfectly enchanted, and I have no doubt you may hear from her shortly, although I believe she is going to South Louisiana this week end and therefore may not take pen in hand immediately. Back at Yucca, I bahn working on my assortment of feeding tubes with a measure of success, so far as attracting our little feathered friends goes. I am under the impression that the strained honey I had, however, instead of being too thick was a little too thin, for the major part of it ran out, although the day was not so warm as the thermometer must frequently be in the Bronx aviary. I shall try another type of honey in a day or two and advise you of the results. In the mean time, may I tell you that within about 20 minutes, the Yucca humming birds had discovered their liquid treasure and five minutes later 8 of them were "standing in line" around the first tube I had set up. They were perfectly lovely ones and were so intent on the promise of felicity awaiting them that they seemed not at all disturbed by my proximity to the tube. I am under the impression that within a day or so they will be eating out of my hand, so to speak, and when we have discovered the proper consistency of the food and the tubes are full, - both at Yucca and Arenbourg, they will be on most intimate terms with me, and, if they have any sort of appreciation, will be asking me to wing words of gratitude to you along with my own for the joint pleasures your thoughtfulness has afforded us.

A Catholic friend of mine told me a story today I think you will like. A gay young nun sought an audience ~~xx~~ with her Mother Superior, and when alone, the young devotee confided to the Reverend Mother that after giving serious consideration to impulses vastly moving her, she had decided to give up the veil, explaining the while just what direction she intended taking. On hearing the latter, the Mother Superior, obviously a bit on the hide-bound side, fainted dead away. A score of lesser members of the holy house came rushing in on hearing the appeal of the terrified little nun, and after due effort, they succeeded in restoring the Mother Superior. To console her, someone explained that she shouldn't be so up-set about the little nun, that it was better for her to declare her intentions frankly, and follow her new profession, - that of prostitute. "What's that, you say, - prostitute!" exclaimed the Mother Superior. Oh, thank Heaven it's only that! I understood her to say she had decided to become a Protestant.

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Friday, June 10th, 1949.

Memorandum

The humidity is wonderful, and even more so the occasional little showers blessing Arenbourg today. I have quite a stack of unread mail, what with Pat having kidnapped my secretary and wisked him off for a two day jaunt to Baton Rouge. In the mid 80's, the thermometer appears to be recording cool spells, but, I fear, it is mostly psychological. Celeste, I believe, ~~has~~ dropped you a note today, and this afternoon withdrew from society to make a "retreat", as the Catholic hierarchy describes the thing. Next week end she drives to Baton Rouge for some frolic or other and the following week end she goes to New Iberia. As for myself, I am hoping I stay put.

I seem sleepy tonight. It must be the humidity, plus too many visitors, all of whom I welcomed although they did eat into some of my time that might have been disposed of differently, had I made the selection.

Dr. Nelson of Southwest in State College with his wife and two children, Ed Rand with wife and child, came up this way last night to spend a day or two at the Rand camp. Dr. Nelson and Ed Rand came to see me last night, and so interrupted my Memorandum, and pushed my hour for folding up my beard back a little. Dr. Nelson I have mentioned before as having explored the Natchez plantation country with Dr. Rand in search of forgotten flower gardens, I believe. Last night he was interested in fruit trees and iris primarily. I showed him the two volume set of 1768 that Dr. Don Worsley had given me. He was entranced and asked if he might take them to camp that night to sleep with. He could. And this morning bright and early he returned with them, asking if he might one day borrow them to have some photostats made. I might as well say that I sent him off with them again, declining his invitation to take lunch with the group at camp. I also confidentially loaned him the somewhat extensive correspondence the Madam had had with the late Dr. Small, one time head of the Brooklyn Botanical Garden, and discoverer of Louisiana Iris, the man who before his death had set the stage for Louisiana Iris to become famous in botanical circles, the unveiling probably falling to Dr. Nelson who is enraptured with them. He will explore the rather voluminous letters and pamphlets, extracting what seems important to him, returning the originals to me intact. As tacit executor of the Madam's papers, I am enchanted to further this opportunity to provide a possible printed record through the Nelson studies, of her contribution to the development of Native Iris, and particularly so as this file was among the stack of stuff set aside for the flames in the general preliminary clean-up about the 20 of "

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November last past.

And I suppose I am a little sleepy, too, because, in view of the "band Nelson visit to hours later than I usually keep, I was awakened at a quarter to 3 a.m. by a tapping at my window. It was Little King, self controlled but obviously suffering mightily from wisdom teeth. I gave him a good glass of the excellent Portuguese Port Dr. Nelson had brought, tintured by an anti-pain pill. The poor child had been unable to sleep all night and in desperation, had crossed the river in his boat and sought out some solace over here. He no longer lives with Pany, but with his wife, her two children and her three aunts. He wanted to tell me about marriage, and I was glad to listen while the anti-pain pill was beginning to take effect. He is madly in love with his mulatto wife, and is happy because they are expecting a baby before long. Her old aunts, however, are a problem, for they won't let the young wife and husband do much radio listening and they frown upon too much appetite. Little King says he isn't so strong as he used to be, - and Heaven knows he was a strapping fellow, because "I am shame faced" to let the old aunts seem I have such an appetite. It seems these ancient mulatto ladies, - descendants of the Condes, pointedly remark that mulattoes don't have vulgar appetites, - only negores possessing that, - and Little King accordingly tries to conform to their aspirations.

By 4:30, he was relieved both in pain of wisdom teeth and in domestic problems and so dissolved into the first mists of dawn. Fortunately a drizzle made it unnecessary for anyone to stir out early, so far as plantation work might be concerned, and so I reckon he probably got caught up a little from the exhaustion of a sleepless night. I, for my part, cast off my gay bandana handkerchief, robe and doined my boots, heading out for Renbourg and the weed department a few minutes earlier than usual, - and liking it.

In today's post came Andre Maurois' memoirs, "I remember, I remember", and so I shall have an opportunity to skim through his autobiography now, what with Mr. Adams' Education just wrapped up. A fine charger of ice tea awaits my attention but something tells me I shall let that slide and Mr. Maurois, too, on the assumption that I shall appreciate both more intelligently on the morrow.

Of the enclosures, little Miss A.'s is interesting on one intuitive account, - "if you will let me come again", - and in the news that Clemence (Glemtine) will get publicity for the impending Show in the New Orleans Item, for which I shall ask copies. La Lake's Catholic-Jewish-Christian Science story would have had more punch, had she been less distracted, but the idea is hilarious regardless.....

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Sunday, June 12th, 1949.

Memorandum: From rain to blood and back to rain again, it has been lovely week end.

Early Saturday afternoon we had an elegant shower, with standing in the cotton rows at sun down.

At supper time, J. H. told me there had been a scuffle Melrose Social Club and that Peter had been cut across the chest, stabbed just above the heart. My grapevine had already reported with certain additional details concerning the gore, etc. Peter had been rushed to the Cloutierville doctor to be sewed up and then brought back to his sister's cabin at the beginning of Lane to Little River, where ~~was~~ he was sleeping.

About 9 p.m., while I was in the midst of the Andre Mau memoire, I heard a tapping at my window, and glancing in the direction, was fascinated by the curious human composition pressed against the window pane, - two dark bright eyes, seen in demi-tasse saucers, with some black space encircling the an outer circle of white indicated a negroe's head swathed in the chin to over the top of the head, in white-white bandage

It was Peter, of course. He was a little high and wanted to talk. I was, on the contrary, a little low and neither wanted to talk nor to listen. Accordingly I gave him a couple of cigarettes which he undoubtedly needed, an anti pain pill and a sedative, and then I sent him on his way. He came back from whence he came.

Fifteen hours later and Peter again appeared on my gall looking like a football player in helmet, just fished out of a flower barrel. He wanted to know if I thought it would be for him to take off his bandages. I thought it wouldn't, and giving him some bread and milk, sent him on his way.

Within half an hour, another elegant shower passed this and so I conclude that if plant and somatic physicians are of same mind as I, everyone is entranced over the doings of the

On Saturday morning at 5 o'clock, I found myself at Are experiencing the two contradictory emotions that usually over

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at this season of the year. For I am always a little depressed when I am forced to admit to myself that I simply can't keep ahead of all the weeds and must resign myself to letting certain sections of the place climb to new heights without any interference from me. But there is the invariable recompensing side of the picture, wherein I am entranced at the splendid growth many of the cultivated plants are making, and I always console myself with the thought that if I keep hammering away with hoe and spade in their neighborhood, they will eventually cast a shade over the uncultivated places that will make it ever so much easier for me to keep in hand.

Two of the grandifloras, planted a couple or three years ago are looking a little puny but the birthday ones seem to be getting along splendidly. A number of the pear trees are stretching for new heights and the persimons planted last Winter seem to have taken hold with vigor and in several instances are putting forth new growth. Some of the crepe myrtles appear unusually vigorous and nearly all of them are increasing in physical stature, while a few of the watermelon red ones, as between Units No. 2 and 3 are in flower. In Unit No. 1, encircling the "elephant traps", the crepe myrtles planted last Winter are very small, but to my delight, many of those I had thought killed by the severe cold of late January, are making signs of life. we are getting plenty of rain. (I interruption)

It seemed to me I finished the last sentence further along on the line, but perhaps not. In any event, I had to leave for half an hour to try to reach a doctor in behalf of some mulatto child whose papa passed this way, imploring aid for the stricken child, I recall I was speaking of things at Arenbourg, but don't remember what I had touched upon following the crepe myrtles, - perhaps nothing. But be that as it may, I must say that the recent rains have really been blessings for our little friends, and here is hoping the present moist moisture will stand them in good stead when the long hot dry days of July, August and September roll round.

Of the enclosures, they speak for themselves, and are not of major interest, although I have a feeling you will find Miss Nellie's letter wonderfully sweet and sad. Frankly I had secretly hoped she might someday give me some little dish or other object of which she has many that belonged to her grandfather, B. L. G. Wailes but apparently I have been disappointed in such a sentimental souvenir of one I admire so mightily. The Levin Wailes letters she mentions are the ones you have already received.

I am glad to have the Postell letter and to look forward to seeing him next month. Dr. Rand was here this afternoon and was enchanted at the prospect of meeting him, for the two of them will find much in common. I have responded to the Postell letter, telling him somebody ought to "do" Gorham, and that I am sure the inhabitants must be descendants from "apoleonic veterans, since Gorham in the 1920's or 1930's had the largest per capita crime record in the United States. I quoted from the popular tune of last year, - or mis-quoted: "You can have her

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Monday, June 13th, 1949.

Memorandum: Yesterday I was talking about Peter's odd appearance but tonight I suppose I might do well to have a go at my own likeness, for having scuffled around with some bees this afternoon, I came away only second best. In fact I have a fine goose egg on the top of my head and one on my right brow, while my left ear looks like a prize fighter's cauliflower, while my left eye is swollen shut. Pretty, don't you imagine.....

But they don't bother me much and by the morrow they will all have disappeared so that no children will be frightened in casting a glance unsuspectingly in my direction.

I am delighted to report that the weather remains hot and humid and this noon we had another nice little shower, followed by warm semi-clouded skies, ideal, of course, for the Arenbourg children.

On my way to the Post Office this morning, I saw Celeste who accompanied me to the store to pick up her mail. She seems to have had a most satisfying retreat spent in some convent or other in the hilly country to the East of Alexandria, La. Madam Regard didn't give such a glowing account of her Saturday and Sunday, spent at Magnolia where she found Miss Sally so busy recounting her own aches and pains that conversation dwindled off into a monologue on Miss Sally's part.

At the store, we encountered Mrs. Coombs who had stopped on business and was hurrying on to more. Celeste invited her for dinner, but she couldn't make it, but did dash in for a few minutes about 1:30, just as the shower began. With her husband on the faculty of North Western State College, - some branch of scientific research, I believe, - she is conversant with the ebb and flow of motivating forces in the Hatchitoches institution and says there is much uneasiness or dissatisfaction on the part of the educators who are restive under the shadow of possible political influences that may or may not be exerted at any time, and that a number of the more active faculty members are casting eyes of yearning toward horizons less be-clouded.

Peter dropped by about first dark. He wanted me to write a letter to his sister in Alexandria, saying he thought me might leave Melrose for a while in favor of a job down yonder, if jobs are currently available. As he might leave on the morrow, I thought

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it might be an excellent time to give him his birthday present, for it's on the 18th, and I am sure nobody in the world ever remembers the natal day of this orphan of Victoria's.

Never in my life have I had such positive proof of that thing called "the perfect gift", in so far as the recipient is concerned. For moved by an overwhelming urge to possess the gift which, at the moment, he had no idea was intended for him, he snatched it slap out from under my nose. Lifting your own birthday present is really something new, don't you think. I really got an enormous kick out of it.

Last week Dora had sent some clothing, mostly ladies' things, but a nice white shirt, too big for me but just about right for Peter, was included. Of all the things in the world Peter likes best, I guess, a white shirt with long sleeves is it. And he never has one, of course, because he is bound to wear one if one is available, and usually there is a scuffle at the Melrose Social Club wherein Peter participates with invariable disaster of his garments. And so I felt assured when I found the shirt Dora had forwarded that it must really be made just for Peter's birthday, and accordingly laid it on the sofa, along side a number of dresses which I expected Dee-dee to call for this evening. And thus it was Peter saw the white shirt before I had an opportunity to make the presentation and so it was that with a deft slight of hand movement, he slipped the shirt behind a pillow in a chair near the door by which he would leave. I suppose he thought it wouldn't be too difficult a trick to execute, what with my indifferent vision to begin with and one eye swollen shut to boot. And so I let the little business run out its course, and after he had successfully negotiated the gallery, I called to him, handing him the paper I had intended to wrap the thing up in. He gasped a little and in spite of his bandages, looked a little "shame-faced", while I, looking, I suppose, like a slightly batter owl, grinned back at him.

He said: "I jus' had to have that thing. I was goin' to ask you about it later. Honest, I won't ever snitch another birthday present that's meant for me."

I must write Dora in a day or two, presenting all this as evidence that his shipment of clothing, so far as one item at least is concerned, had the ultimate in appeal and the last word in satisfying a human want. What's more, it provided a laugh for both Peter and me which really is something under present circumstances.

And now for the ice tea department and a chapter with M. Maur Maurois, and thence a bit of beard folding in anticipation of a busy dawn.

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Tuesday, June 14th, 1949.

Memorandum: ...

It's rather cool tonight, perhaps in the upper '70's, after a deliciously slow rain that has fallen intermittently since 8 o'clock this morning. I am liking every drop and long before the summer is finished, will probably be regretting more didn't descend upon us while it was so obviously in the mood. Yesterday's bee business seemed to give me a slight fever, and that provided me with an excellent excuse to do a little extra reading. By noon today, I could get my eye open, and by tomorrow I shall have lost all evidence of the battle, but I shall probably give myself the pleasure of an extra page or two tonight, for I am about finished with the Maurois memoir. It is an entertaining book and the presence of familiar people and places gives it more interest, probably, than the intrinsic value of the literary value. A luncheon with Herbert Hoover in Chicago and a dinner with Mr. Roosevelt at the White House shortly afterward gives him an opportunity to set up both men in what seems to me their appropriate niches, although thus far, neither American figure is given much space. There are a couple of interesting paragraphs touching upon a dinner with the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and other accounts of visits to the country homes of Francois Mauriac and others giving one pleasant little intimate glimpses that are the chief charm of the volume.

I have been trying to think of just when it was I saw him last. I am sure it was in New York, and I may have mentioned it to you at the time. My guess is that it may have been around 1936 or 1937. Perhaps, if I read a little more carefully I would have noticed some reference to which years around that period he was in America, but I didn't remark upon it, and I don't care enough to turn back through the pages to check up on the point. Always an avid reader of his newspaper and magazine articles, I never did much about his books, and for what reason, I know not. I do remember Ariel, the Life of Shelly, and I liked it. Byron, supposedly his most studious biography, I never did read, and I am wondering why. I think I shall write old Xenophon about that one. Somehow most of the Maurois titles failed to stimulate my curiosity. "Les Discours du Colonel Bramble, Logicians and Magicians, or some such, The Atmosphere of Love, Climat, or some such, - and none of them ever seemed to stimulate my curiosity. Even his Family Circle, - and I am not sure that was the precise title, for my mind seems a mixture of the titles as they appeared in the French and the American editions, - I guess the thing was called Cercle de Famille in French, lacked something or other in its appeal, due, perhaps, in part, to my sub-conscious puzzlement over the phrase which

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somehow suggested something about the theatre to me, - the Family Circle, as opposed to other divisions of the auditorium.

And now, as I stop to think back, perhaps even Les Silences de Col. Bramble and Les Discourses de Quelqu'un O'Grady were sufficiently suggestive the one of the other that I never did seem to care to straighten them out in my mind, although, I suspect, had I read them, I might have found the titles suitable and the nature of the volumes quite distinct.

Eventually someone will probably do a very interesting study of two of Europe's most popular writers of contemporary times: - Zweig and Maurois. Their ancestry, their secured financial situation, their social connections, their intellectual friendships in literary fields, their marriages, their successes in biographical sketches and their own memoirs will provide some arresting parallels while the definite differences in personality and private interests will high-point the contrasts strikingly.

In the case of the individual memoirs written by each man, I suppose these were composed under unusual stress in both cases. Off hand I should say the Zweig memoir made a stronger impression on me than the Maurois, and whatever the respective intentions, the Zweig self portrait is more appealing to me of the two. As revealed by the considerations set forth in the Zweig memoir, - what was it called, "Two Worlds", I get the impression that the Austrian's life turned out naturally and approached a measure of perfection. In the Maurois "I Remember, I Remember", I somehow get the feeling that the latter, endowed with so many advantages, really ought to have wrought more mightily.

Well, speaking of literary evenings, as nobody was, it seems to me I have concentrated on that line about long enough. However I must report that the June Talking Book Topics came to hand today, and I found comparatively little of excitement in it for me. I notice A la Recherche du Temps Perdu, in French, is listed, and as a new item for the users of Talking Books, that somehow seems like an old chestnut. The burden of the new list comprises fiction and detective stories while biographies, history and such like get but short shift. Again I must pen old Xenophon a line, - I nearly said "put a bee in his bonnet" but that's getting a little too close to home.

For some reason known only to herself and her maker, Celeste seems adamant about having the plantation provide me with new slip covers for my living room sofa and heaven knows what all. She brought samples of chintz for me to select from the other day, and passed this way this afternoon to take the proper measurements for the furniture. There's no telling what the harvest in interior desperation may be.....

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Wednesday, June 15th, 1949,

Memorandum:

The rainy season has apparently ended. A steaming sun rode the heavens today and whatever hadn't as yet responded to the moisture began climbing in response to the added impetus.

What with the soupy situation in the cotton fields, the colored folks have been foot loose and fancy free these past several days, and of course almost anything can happen when "the devil finds work for idle hands".

I can't believe that the same moisture that laid off the darkies laid off the ducks, too, but two darkies and a duck got into a tangle last night, and what with a little prompting, the colored folks recounting the tale to me have contrived quite an episode for Walt Disney to go to work on.

An hour before first dark last evening, Beau Mack and Ezra were driving at a pretty good clip in Beau's car, about half way between the spillway and "elrose when, at the point where the road and river are adjacent, the car swirled and toppled down the bank, hurting nobody much, bending the car considerably and stopping just short of the river itself. Several people in the immediate neighborhood, including Nip Brown who lives just opposite the place where the car went over the bank, gave a hand to Beau and Ezra. The car was soon turned rightside up and what with the engine still running, plus some pushing by the members of the crowd, the stuff that had fallen out of the car was replaced and the car back on the highway.

Naturally Beau, who had been at the wheel, wouldn't admit carelessness on his part, due to having had a drink. He took pains to explain the mishap to the assembled negroes by saying it was the result of his attempt to avoid hitting Nip Brown's duck which had just come up from the river and was heading across the road as he came along.

Nip grinned slyly and then admitted the whole business could be put on the old duck, saying:

"You all knows how drunken ducks is, a-staggerin' around, and that there duck of mine was probably drunk alright, caused a look down there where he came up out the water and where the car spilled around. You all see, that gallon bottle half full of wine, don't you. Well, if it didn't spill out of you all's car, then it sure must have been somethin' my duck had been workin' on."

And at that the old duck from across the road gave a couple

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of non-committal quacks, everybody roared, Beau and Ezra rescued the bottle and gave everybody a drink, and putting it back in the car, rattled off on up the road.

In view of references made in times past to the Central American voyages of the merchant planter, I think you will experience no difficulty at all in comprehending the implications in the present paragraph. Mrs. Stephen Henry is giving a fashionable tea in Baton Rouge today and Celeste is attending, having taken her mother as far as Mangura, where they will spend two or three days before returning home. Next week end some frolic or other in New Iberia will take them away again, with the wife of the merchant planter always as free as a bird and happiest withal, when on the wing. You may recall that last week end was devoted to a "retreat". In view of the fragile nature of a domestic arrangement, supported by such far flung exploits for entertainment, one shouldn't be astonished, I suppose, if a lady from Guatemala spent last week end at a camp on Cane River between here and the bridge. I was presented when she made her initial pilgrimage on Saturday evening when, were a visitor's book kept at Melrose, hers would not have been inscribed. I found her attractive, charming and seemingly more interested in a variety of subjects than any other lady I had chatted with during the week. She mentioned Martha Robinson as a friend and spoke of having made several trips with her on various occasions, - twice to Natchitoches, the town, I believe, where she was born.

I don't know what the program was for Sunday, but I assume that it was mutually understood, as between official host and guest, that the former would, as usual, depart for town shortly after mid day and the guest for New Orleans. As indicated in my Sunday letter, Dr. Rand came to see me on Sunday afternoon. An hour later, Mrs. Rand and Mrs. Pattison followed, and arriving at Yucca with them was Eugabon, slightly inebriated, saying two ladies were at the front gate, asking to see me. I accordingly left the Rands at Yucca, imagining the identity of the ladies, and found them, armed with camera, awaiting me. They, the lady and her sister, had apparently delayed their departure a bit, and in view of Mrs. Pattison's announcement that she would return to Melrose on Tuesday with the Rands, it occurred to me that I must at all extremities, prevent these two groups from establishing contact, since dishy Mrs. Pattison, unwittingly, might spill too much education across the fence after the lapse of a couple of days. Accordingly the camera enthusiasts were given an opportunity to "strike" a few shots hurriedly, and since Eugabon must have mentioned to them that Dr. Rand was here, and a desire was expressed to meet him, I brushed the desire aside by explaining he was deep in research in the library and that other pilgrims were awaiting me at my house. I was glad when I had successfully engineered them back to the front gate and into their car, without the two direct currents establishing contact. Drunken ducks and frolicsome matrons, merely two more elements lending color to lend color to colorful old Melrose.....

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Thursday, June 16th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Pre-natal pains on the part of the prospective papa prevented Eugene, the Melrose clerk handling out-going mail from getting away from the Natchitoches Hospital today.

At such times, and thank heavens no man suffers such pains too frequently, J. D., as nominal Postmaster, seconded by Pat, suffice around with cancellation stamps, up-set glue pots and generally carry on with an abandon that is at once hilarious and "worry-some", if the casual citizen really hopes the mails will not get so gummed up the individual pieces will ever reach their destination. And so I withheld Wednesday's Memo from the mails, but will undoubtedly be able to post it on Friday morning without any risk of it being placed in a parcel post allotment or slapped into a package of newly hatched baby chicks, destined for some remote place in the opposite direction from Manhattan.

Accustomed to give scant attention to anything not interesting him, - and nothing about the Post Office does, - J. D. is just the type to brush aside an atom bomb, remarking in absentmindedness:

"Aw, pay no attention. That's of no account."

Today being Thursday, Dr. Knipmayer dropped in for his weekly chat and a glass of wine. He spoke of the dinner he gave the Parish physicians on Tuesday and said that Dr. Worsley was among those present. It seems the Worsleys are in vast tumult these days, what with anticipating a month's visit from Don's mother, aunt and brother from California within the next week or so, while preparing in the mean time to relinquish the present offices on Front Street overlooking Cane River, in favor of more extensive ones a couple of blocks away and back from the river. I gather that flocks of urban patients have swelled the ranks of Dr. Eleanor's rural ones who remained faithful following her withdrawal from Cloutierville to Natchitoches, so that her office and waiting rooms originally selected have proven xx hopelessly inadequate. Be it remembered in passing, too, that so far as waiting rooms go, a physician in the South must provide himself with at least two, since custom decrees that separate ones for white and for colored patients be maintained. I suppose some physicians of hill billy persuasion

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might well get along with a minimum of space for the colored patients whose patronage might be disdained, but in view of the lady doctor's well known position in such matters, one may be certain that the untutored field hand negroes will get just as much attention as the top-heavy members of the College faculty.

Among today's pilgrims were people from St. Louis, who told me they were in Louisiana, I believe they said Natchitoches, attending a meeting of the C. A. R. I at once confessed by ignorance of what the alphabetic jumble stood for, and discovered it to be Children of the American Revolution. Furthermore it seems there is a S. A. R., being Sons of the American Revolution, whereupon I threw up my hands and declared I had always supposed that descendants of those boisterous revolutionaries never begot anything but Daughters, - and the pilgrims took me seriously. What with the recent "dews and damps", plus a cloudless sky and fairly high humidity, everything at Arenbourg is growing beyond any attempt at control. Early this morning as the sun was just peeping over the horizon, I glanced across an expanse of weeds through which shone rows of golden day lilies, a little indistinct through the greenery, but lovely nevertheless and withal the more so because of the chance scattering of blue larkspur that had come up at random among the masses of yellow.

Yesterday I took Puny, the Melrose expert in grafting pecanes, to observe what should be trimmed from our embryo pecanes at present and what would be suitable for grafting next Spring. He seemed surprised at the growth of the seedling pecanes which I have permitted to develop where ever they chanced to come up from seed. Most of these are five feet tall at least, and what with present atmospheric conditions being so favorable, will probably climb to new heights during the current growing season.

We also took a look at some of the persimmons, a couple of which we shall graft new Spring, using cuttings from a unique oriental tree at Melrose which possessed of unusual height and luxuriance of limb spread. Tomorrow Peter returns to the doctor with a view to having the stitches removed from last Saturday's slashings, and by Saturday he ought to be feeling sufficiently active, and the ground should be dry enough to permit another turning over of the soil in the drives and on the terrace to further delay complete mastery of the place by the weeds.

Following two or three days of comparative thinness, the incoming post suddenly fattened imposingly today, and as Mr. Brew didn't arrive tonight until nearly 9, I find myself confronted by half a dozen unimportant responses I had better make before folding up, and so fall asleep, assured of an unencumbered dawn....

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Friday, June 17th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Thirty million times would not have suffice to tell you how happy are Arenbourg and I tonight. For today was Arenbourg's birthday, and the two of us celebrated together by just relaxing for a pleasant half hour, feeling somehow that we were not alone in the enjoyment we had in contemplating the gradual growth going on in the main outlines of the place, and anticipating additional joys by contemplating how pleasant it is going to be when things have advanced a little further and all three of us are combined in our efforts to cultivate some of the finer touches.

It is a pleasant coincidence that as Arenbourg and I sat day dreaming thus, along about 11 a.m., three splendid little humming birds joined us, at first hovering about the trumpet vine, which, in reading your elegant letter tonight, I notice you stated had great appeal for these particular little feathered friends. I think I mentioned in a previous note that a fine trumpet vine is growing along side the old "stoyer house, - one that we planted a year or so ago. Within the last couple of days two lovely sprays of blossoms have unfolded and it was apparently these clusters that attracted the birds. But without seeming at all nervous because of my presence, they nevertheless did give the impression they were being distracted by something or other, and it goes without saying that I was perfectly enchanted when all three of them seemed to discover the feeding tube which I had hung a foot or two above the flower clusters. They all darted toward it, with the two hovering ever so close to the third while he sampled and re-sampled the food before giving way to one of his companions.

My guess is that these birds may well remember from one season to another where their favorite feeding places are situated, just as they obviously remember where last season's summer home was located, and what confirms me in this is the fact that the tubes at "ucca are placed on the front gallery, not at the West end of the house where the honeysuckle blossoms so luxuriantly at present, but rather at the East end of the gallery where every year, beginning about the 10th of July, the butterfly lilies will blow. For to this spot come the humming birds regularly, and especially at dusk, and while the lilies are blossoming only a month hence, still the birds seem perfectly at home already, what with your generosity in their behalf and mine.

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I am so glad to know that things at Riverdale seem to be progressing satisfactorily, and may the good work go on. I am interested to learn something about the charges. I can't be certain, for I paid scant attention at the time the matter was being discussed, but it seemed to me that a two or three week's session in the sanitarium at New Orleans where high priests of this treatment hold forth, the charge per patient is something like one thousand two hundred dollars. This would seem to indicate the Riverdale prices aren't greatly out of line with those of the Crescent City, depending in part, of course, on the length of time required at Riverdale and the number of treatments following departure from the institution. But don't let me get started on this, for as you know, I am rabid in matters concerning charges in medical matters. At table yesterday, J. B., Pat and I were discussing the proposed Truman Health bill and both, naturally, said they opposed it and asked me where I stood. I told them I stood where I could see clearly enough that there is something wrong with the present medical set up, and that all the local doctors are enjoying enormous incomes, as opposed to other lines of endeavor, and that I was for some alteration in such a situation, and since the Truman bill seems to be the only one that suggests it would make a dent in the present set up, I am in favor of it momentarily.

The name of Sam Tobin came up tonight at supper. J. B. said he had seen him this afternoon, and that Sam was feeling mighty sore, having just been arrested in "atchitoches" for operating a motorcycle while under the influence of liquor. He had just telephoned his mama in Arizona, saying he would be over to see her, arriving in the morning, - the place being about 2,000 miles from here, but he got no further than town on the selected vehicle, but told J. B. he would leave by automobile tonight. How they still live on the plantation, no one but the "hreveport" banks controlling it seem to know, and I doubt if they do.

I learn that the clerk's baby boy wasn't born until 4 o'clock this morning, and so he didn't get down to business from town today, but is expected in the morning. My brief note to you this morning indicated that all was going alright in the postal department but that I shall not post one "emo" written a day or two back, until the regular clerk is here, so it will probably go forward with this note.

It is so good of you to speak so encouragingly of so many subjects touched upon in our recent correspondence. And thanks for setting me straight on one or two points in enclosures I had not been able to figure out by myself. I shall turn the matter of the psychological slant over in my mind again and refer to it later. I am hoping Mrs. R. B. Williams may come to finish the June "Call" article shortly. I suppose Celeste and Madam Regard will return this week end, prior to taking off next Thursday. Again may I say thanks for the promise of happiness that came to Arenbour in today's post. So many nice things to be considered and we shall talk of them later....

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Sunday, June 19th, 1949.

Memorandum:

That a unexpected pleasure to receive another elegant letter, hard on the heels of the birthday one the day before. How could describe such a week end, except in terms of amplitude.

and thanks for sharing the note from the lady next door, who seems to have covered quite a lot in her note, all in all. One thing is certain, she really is entranced with her humming bird bottle, and still displays it with pride whenever anyone drops in, singing praises in your favor at each showing.

The post office is functioning to perfection again and I shall probably forward some correspondence under separate cover, although I don't recall if any of it is of much interest.

On Saturday came one Mr. Morgan, a Baton Rouge photographer and associate of some State or Federal Department, I believe. His visit here, originally scheduled to be made in company with Frances Parkinson Keyes, finally eventuated in his coming alone. He got some rather interesting pictures, I think, and was entranced with Yucca and the African House in particular.

He and la Keyes leave for New York on the 15th of July to go over an item with Harper and Brother who are bringing out a photographic book of Louisiana before the end of the year, the thing going into production right away. The photographs are by Mr. Morgan, the text and captions by la Keyes. At the last minute, she discovered she couldn't make the Cane River tour, and so is to write her impressions of the region without bothering to pass this way. I have heard of people trying to remember something they never knew, but this is the first time anyone tried to do that trick with the Cane River country that I can remember. Mr. Morgan said that Mrs. Keyes is writing me for particulars regarding the subject. Her wand may produce magical results when waved at some people, but something tells me she will have to beat the air mightily if she gets much of a peep out of me. At the moment she is living in Baton Rouge, and since New Orleans is much closer to that city than is the Cane River country, let her take the line of least geographical resistance, and consult such experts on the Cane River country in the Crescent City as "arnett" Lane, little Miss Alberta or Frances Benjamin Johnson. Of course you know and she knows and I know that not one of those three would or could give her anything of value in her present conquest for impressions which have never impressed her, and while it is true that "tools build houses for wise men to live in", I am not dreaming of writing manuscripts for that bag to pass off as her own, and thereby cash in on.

3657

In spite of the heat and humidity, - and we had a momentary but welcomed shower this noon, the pilgrims problem remains a pilgrims problem. And perhaps shouldn't lay it all on the pilgrims, for must say that Henrys contribute to the come and go element that supple sometimes charge off to pilgrims. For instance, J. H. came to see me three times today, Payne twice, Celeste once, a flock of pilgrims and Adam and some of her friends.

rs. and, in fact, invited me for luncheon today, but never did go, that with the opportunity of breaking bread alone with - at and a desire to skip contact with the several guests at the - and camp, but it was certainly kind of her to drop by to invite me. till, as time goes on, find that - more and more prefer smaller numbers of people at individual sittings, and during the coming week shall undoubtedly have an opportunity to dine with the - ands in comparative seclusion, which suits me much better than with larger groups.

Today, being the 19th, and therefore an occasion for the negroes to celebrate, - although none of them have the slightest reason as to what the date commemorates, they finally decided to have a vast picnic at t. ary's-on-the-ayou. vast amount of food was assembled and a few of my more intimate friends dropped by, asking me to accept a lift in their respective cars, and so to join them in the merry-making. but circumstances in the pilgrim department prevent me from going, and then the little shower probably dampened a bit of the food stuffs, if not the gaiety, assembled at that delicious rural retreat on Little River. Later in the afternoon r. rew came by to see me to talk over his problems. It seems that his wife is pregnant for one thing, and another is that am rown's wife persuaded her last night that r. rew wasn't paying her enough attention, and so persuaded her to quit her husband temporarily. What with advice being a free commodity, am always ready to spread it about with endless lavishness, and so was glad to commune ith this youthful husband and expectant father. and then eter, who had slept through the eday in the bamboo hedge, passed this way to ask me to look at his jaw, to tell him if thought he might remove the bandages before going to call on a girl friend tonight. Yank came by, close on eter's departure, to ask if might have a small shot of wine. wouldn't. Ezra came by half an hour later to ask the same question, and did. and then, for a second round, came the devotee of - arper's azaar, inviting me for tea, which declined and to tell me of . . . s expressed admiration for me at my long suffering 2with pilgrims this morning. s he expalined it to her, and she to me, a group had asked him at the store this morning if they might make a tour, and he had sent them to me, - people from eaven knows where, guests at a local camp. and then shortly after they had departed a second group, - two ladies, - ad come, asking if they might make a tour, and he, in defense of me had declined their request on my behalf, swearing that had gone to town.

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Memorandum
I reckon I need scarcely point out that my other machine is temporarily, at least, out of whack, and accordingly I am forced to fall back on to this thing, which, while a lovely machine, is certainly a pain in the neck, since every tick I give it, is done with the uncertainty of what turns up as a result, realizing, as I do, that the keyboard is not standard. I apologize for the difficulties you may experience in trying to figure out what individual words are intended. Perhaps the old one can be fixed up again before too long, I hope.

In Sunday's memo, I think I mentioned the visit of Mr. Morgan to Melrose on Saturday. He mentioned a machine which records conversations on a tape that can readily be played back by anyone having a reproducing unit. I assume this outfit must be something like the old machines designed for a person to give dictation on cylinders, the letters to be taken down by a stenographer at any convenient time. Mr. Morgan expressed his regret that he did not have one with him on Saturday so that he might take away with him the particulars about the Cane River which I had mentioned in talking with him.

He told me he has a sister living in Canada who lectures every year in several Canadian cities and in communities in the Northern States of the United States, usually on subjects dealing with the States bordering on the Gulf of Mexico. He says she makes recordings of conversations with people in this region, as well as insect sounds and the songs of birds, playing these back to her Northern audiences during her lectures.

He said these recording tapes are comparatively inexpensive, but didn't recall the exact price. If not too complicated to operate, both in recording and playing back, wouldn't it be nice to be able to exchange chats through this medium from time to time and to thus capture at the same time some of the voices of personalities like the Dark Duke and others who sometimes find their way into these memoranda. And speaking of the Dark Duke recalls to mind something he told me some time back about an instrument that must have constituted something in itself not unlike the recording machine mentioned by Mr. Morgan. According to the Dark Duke, three Melrose negroes went to town one day to see about having a radio repaired. Ezra, I believe his brother in law and some one else. They had no luck in three shops and so finally, as a last resort, visited Mr. Homes, who has the lower floor of his dwelling set apart for displaying radio, victrola, and kindred machines. Mr. Homes, a one other things, drives his own airplane, is indifferent about customers and usually charges unusually high prices.

3657

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3658

Memorandum

I reckon I need scarcely point out that my other machine is temporarily, at least, out of whack, and accordingly I am forced to fall back on to this thing, which, while a lovely machine, is certainly a pain in the neck, since every tick I give it, is done with the uncertainty of what turns up as a result, realizing, as I do, that the keyboard is not standard. I apologize for the difficulties you may experience in trying to figure out what individual words are intended. Perhaps the old one can be fixed up again before too long, I hope.

In Sunday's memo, I think I mentioned the visit of Mr. Morgan to Melrose on Saturday. He mentioned a machine which records conversations on a tape that can readily be played back by anyone having a reproducing unit. I assume this outfit must be something like the old machines designed for a person to give dictation on cylinders, the letters to be taken down by a stenographer at any convenient time. Mr. Morgan expressed his regret that he did not have one with him on Saturday so that he might take away with him the particulars about the Cane River which I had mentioned in talking with him.

He told me he has a sister living in Canada who lectures every year in several Canadian cities and in communities in the Northern States of the United States, usually on subjects dealing with the States bordering on the Gulf of Mexico. He says she makes recordings of conversations with people in this region, as well as insect sounds and the songs of birds, playing these back to her Northern audiences during her lectures.

He said these recording tapes are comparatively inexpensive, but didn't recall the exact price. If not too complicated to operate, both in recording and playing back, wouldn't it be nice to be able to exchange chats through this medium from time to time and to thus capture at the same time some of the voices of personalities like the Dark Duke and others who sometimes find their way into these memoranda. And speaking of the Dark Duke recalls to mind something he told me some time back about an instrument that must have constituted something in itself not unlike the recording machine mentioned by Mr. Morgan. According to the Dark Duke, three Melrose negroes went to town one day to see about having a radio repaired, Ezra, I believe his brother in law and some one else. They had no luck in three shops and so finally, as a last resort, visited Mr. Homes, who has the lower floor of his dwelling set apart for displaying radio, victrola, and kindred machines. Mr. Homes, among other things, drives his own airplane, is indifferent about customers and usually charges unusually high prices.

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In view of these circumstances, plus the fact that no one showed up for some time after the boys entered the shop, they had quite an opportunity to discuss the world in general and Mr. Homes in particular. In the beginning there had been some observations made as to the pretty instruments on display, following which, one of the boys remarked that he hoped quote that white bastard wont charge us a million dollars for that part uses needs. unquote.

Shortly afterward Mr. Homes appeared and to the astonishment of the three customers, they suddenly heard their earlier conversation being played back to them on some kind of a public address system. Naturally they were terror stricken when all of them suddenly remembered the passing remark about the owner's parentage, and were about to bolt from the place when the recording suddenly broke off. It goes without saying that they stated their wants with dispatch and departed gingerly.

Today's pilgrims included a charming young couple who had spent the week end at one of the camps on Melrose across the river. This camp is owned or rather rented by a member of the Frost Lumber Company of Shreveport, and frequently associates with the local organization. The couple, a Mr. and Mrs. Williams, had been located somewhere in the Virginia and while in camp there, his wife had secured a position with the head of the Williamsburgh corporation, or whatever the society is called that operates that unit of J. D. R.'s multitudinous empire. I doubt if she got much out of her Melrose tour, but I certainly enjoyed inside particulars about Williamsburgh, and all of them sounded on the right side.

It doesn't seem possible, and yet I had an inspiration regarding plantation operation today that ought to tickle both J. H. from a business point of view and Celeste from a social. Add to this that it might give Mrs. Rand a break and hold the promise of added shekles to the Melrose money bags, and the whole thing sounds sillier. I shall toss out this suggestion at some appropriate sitting. When November comes, Celeste can receive as hostess for Melrose by way of entertaining some Alexandria club or clubs to which Mrs. Rand belongs, the invitation being offered through Mrs. Rand as an hospitable gesture to afford entertainment for her road running friends who might like to visit the old plantation and observe how pecanese are gathered and passed on to the public. As invariably happens when people are visiting the place at that time, lots of the guests will think of people to whom they would like to have shipments made, and thus everyone can have a grand time all the way around, although, come to think of it, I, personally, don't need pilgrims and shall profit not at all from the sales, but there is always the recompense of feeling better after laying an egg.....

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Tuesday, June 21st, 1949.

Memorandum
According to my calendar, today was a long one while the thermometer indicated it was among the hotter. But I liked both features, for it provided a few extra strokes of the weed knife at Arenbourg, and what with the dampness of last week, there must have been additional growth among the birthday eat things, thanks to the intense heat. Two nice fat white geese waddle up from the river to assist me in my efforts in eradicating Johnson grass. I liked them. And on the way back to Yucca, I passed a couple of Alphonse's ducks dabbling about in some water in the ditch. They were gay but sober birds and no where did I detect a suggestion of a wine bottle. Back home, however, I saw Celeste who had much to tell me about her plans for the afternoon when she drove down to Magnolia to consult with her friend, Mrs. Mat Hertzog, for the two ladies are stirring up a prolonged week end in New Iberia, taking Madam Regard as far as Mansura with them, where she will remain with her daughters until the two frolicsome gamatrons will head Northward again early next week. Surely this week end ought to hold much promise for Cane River doings while the local matrons are vainly pursuing distractions in South Louisiana.

Just after sun up this morning, I recalled the particulars of your sent me in your last letter regarding the devastation on our bird life wrought by reckless spraying of D. D. T., for there was no air stirring and an airplane was flying just above the tree tops in stretches of cotton fields a little beyond St. Augustin Church, dropping a deadly dew over everything. I couldn't know if birds readily comprehend the danger inherent in this process or not, but it seemed to me I never saw so many birds at Arenbourg before. I have heard it said that deer are remarkably acute in sensing the protection a wire fence or other enclosure provides for them in a case set aside for them. Madam used to tell of a deer park on a plantation in South Louisiana, adjoining a forest into which the animals would sometimes wander. Sometimes hunters would station themselves not far from the fence, hoping to bag a duck on the forest side, and the deer, when shot at would instinctively dart for the fence at the swiftest speed, but would immediately stop short, once they had cleared the wire fence where their instinct assured them of complete safety. Perhaps the birds have some such sense, too, and I think I shall begin in easing the ration of bread crumbs I usually carry to Arenbourg with me for my old friend, the mocking bird, and I shall let the big old clumps of elder berries, just coming into fruit, stand for another ten days or so, in order that our

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friends may find an amply stocked larder.

Peter, his bandages from ten days back removed, has returned to his tractor, and is dusting cotton with some kind of a contraption that looks more like a mechanical octopus than anything I can think of. It is attached to the back of a tractor, with a box about two feet square, placed just behind a little fan which drives the dust into six or eight flexible tubes, so spread out as to cover six or eight rows of cotton as the tractor proceeds across the field. At supper J. H. told me he prefers this type of dusting to the airplane method, so much is wasted and scattered about on other plants than the cotton because of the attitude required by the aviator to keep his machine above the pecanecane trees that dot so many of the Melrose cotton fields. I believe the object of the present assault is to dispose of the plant lice that tend to be numerous at this season when the blossoms are beginning to unfold and the squares that will be developed into bolls provide objects of fundamental interest to the plant lice. The boll weevil will not begin to make his head bow much before August. I must inquire as to what became of the flame throwing device that seemed so popular a couple of years back. I don't recall having seen it used last year, and I have heard nothing about it thus far this season.

The clerk and I dined alone together this noon. He told me he had a card today from T. Baranowski who is in New York with his wife. The clerk also told me that Ted's father-in-law who lives in Bayou Natchez, came down to see J. H. a day or two ago, feeling unhappy because J. H. had let his son-in-law go to give Pat a summer job. The clerk said J. H. told the man frankly the actual reason why Teddy had ceased to be useful. It would be interesting to know what kind of a letter, if any, the Baranowskis in New York receive from Bayou Natchez, and if Ted will return to Louisiana and if his wife will, either alone or with her husband. What a business.....

There is a somewhat sardonic twist to one aspect of this whole tempest in a teapot. The fuse leading to the dynamite was actually ignited by Mattie, the cook and character in the Gilmore. Soon after Ted's advent at Melrose, she was the object of some attention on his part, as I understand it. Later her power of attraction dwindled and mistakenly she attributed this diminution not to herself but to poor Aurellia, and poison against the latter was poured into every likely ear, in hopes that with Aurellia eliminated from the premises, her own star might wax bright again. And so Aurellia was finally eliminated, but other ladies intervened in the extra marital business. Then smart Mattie, disguising herself as companion of virtuous husbands, whispered in their ears that their wives were being seduced, and persuaded them to complain, still hoping by that method of elimination, supposing Ted would merely be asked to restrain his amorous visitation, but lo, the whole thing blew up and Mattie is very unhappy against Fate, not

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Wednesday, June 22nd, 1949.

Memorandum,

Cloudless skies and boiling thermometers are the order of the day but last week's moisture plus the heavy dews we are blessed with nightly unite to give the horticultural field a favorable appearance.

But the drowsiness of mid day did not obtain after the cool of night and what with a flagon of ice tea along side I read a little later than usual last night.

[illegible]

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Wednesday, June 22nd, 1943.

and thus the newly formed domestic setting of Mr. Br is partially vacant these nights. He takes the mattress coldly but apparently did want to run over the ma

At the local honkey tonk there promises to be a

"double future" tonight and from the number of dusky
having tapped on my window, I assumed a heap of people
for it.....

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Thursday, June 23rd, 1949.

At 2 this morning I awoke to the tune of a fine
canonade and for an hour afterward a splendid rain came
cascading down from on high.

By sun up the skies had cleared and a boiling sun had birthday magnolias and persimmons just a jumping at Arenbourg. It was too oozezy under foot to do much gardening except for the pulling of weeds and weeds were pulled with abandon.

The plantation didn't work and that afforded me an opportunity to grab off half a dozen men to attack the major necessities in the Melrose gardens. Before 10 o'clock I had knocked off special correspondence for four different Little River friends and lent an ear to the problems of two others, after which Dr. and Mrs. Knipmayer came, followed by Celeste, and so the day got started.

But before leaving the crew in the Melrose gardens I must remark upon a lovely past tense employed by one of the workmen. I had four men with weed knives cutting grass, followed by a man with a rake who in turn was followed up by a couple of pushers of lawn mowers, while two more were busy with saw and garden shears, trimming up the larger growth along the byeways. I invariably point out the plans of such campaigns to all the workers, feeling that if they understand exactly what each one is to do and the reason, the whole business will move along more smoothly. The man with the rake anticipated the possibility that I might be bogged down elsewhere at a time when he had completed his task, and accordingly inquired

"What's I to do when I done got it all rucked."

Rake for the present, ruck for the past, or if it might only be so contrived, le plus que parfait, don't you think so.

It was pleasant to see the Knipmayers, and what with Time making such mighty strides, it occurred to us while they were here that this was the first Mrs. Knipmayer had been at Melrose since last September, which seems like quite a long time measured by the intervening events. We didn't touch on any very interesting subjects, however, what with Frau Knipmayer anticipating what we should eat at the Magnolia 4th of July picnic and Herr Docktordwelling on the books of F. P. Keyes which he has read and liked and expressing

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the hope she will come this way within the next two weeks
so he may have a chat with her.

Celeste arrived in the midst of their sitting to
say that Miss Sally had telephoned to ask if she might have
some flowers to be brought by the Knipmayers in order to
set things right on her altar for some high priest who
expects to hold a special service at Magnolia tomorrow.
Flowers picked in a boiling sun at full tide heat of 11 a.m.
wouldn't be worth the powder and shot to blow them into
the middle of next week of course, but I rounded up some
stuff regardless and half an hour later, I am sure, she
received a floral offering that resembled nothing so much
as a last year's bird's nest.

In the afternoon the garden force was augmented by
some extra men and a truck to haul out trash, while pilgrims
who were so unlucky as to select this day for a tour found
short rations in the Southern hospitality department.

I knocked off for a cold Coca Cola with Mrs. Combs when
she passed by, on her way to Alexandria where her mother is
thought to be on her death bed and thence on to Beaumont where
her Uncle died this morning. She brought me a letter from
the Baton Rouge office of the Welfare Department, saying they
had just received a brand new type of Reading Machine from
the Library of Congress and that they were sending it to me.
It is good to know they remembered me in this fashion even
though with my present one in perfect working order I am
certainly in no need of a new one, but perhaps they have
in mind to ask me for a statement of opinion as to the new
one and so are sending it on the assumption that I might
respond more promptly than some readers. This is the third
time they have sent me something, records in previous
instances, asking for my reaction to their new features.
I take it they primarily want a confirmation of their own opinion
that their handiwork is good since the items must have
been thoroughly tested by many hands before reaching me for
surely they don't go to the trouble and expense of contriving
such expensive objects first and only then making inquiry
as to their suitability for the users. But I am always glad
to give them an elaborate reaction in response to which I invariably
receive no acknowledgement whatsoever.

I read a little last night before folding up and
was impressed by a statement attributed to Sully Prudhomme
whose writings I know not at all. From the indirect quotation
I gather that in contemplating life in general old Sully
once remarked man's uttermost condemnation is pronounced
against him pre nately when a Voice thunders forth "Thou
shalt be born". Isn't that an arresting idea.....

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ESTATE OF JOHN H. HENRY, SR.

MERCHANT AND PLANTER

J. H. HENRY, AGENT MELROSE, LA. PHONE 4901 NATCHITOCHES, LA.

Friday, June 24th, 1949.

Memorandum
Two elegant showers today, with sufficient space between
them to enable a maximum absorption. The cotton may well be
concentrating itself all on plant growth and nothing on bolls
but there is no great loss without some small gain and surely
things at Arenbourg are reaping their own special harvest.

Tonight it is sprinkling again but the Weather Man promises
clear skies and high thermometer readings for the week end, and
that ought to please everyone, including the ladies next door
who plan to take off at 5 in the morning for their jaunt into
South Louisiana. Madam Regard will be deposited at Mansura and
the Hertzog Henry ladies will continue their trek with luncheon
at some famous food place in Opelousas and tea at New Iberia where
they will remain until Sunday or Monday and then slide South Eastward
to look in on Paynie who is taking a ten day rest period at
Touro Infirmary in New Orleans, and thence back home.

So the week end begins and on Monday Pat will gird up his
loins and head out for the Brownsville area of South Texas to
spend a couple of weeks with his mother, and so miss the family conclave
of the paternal branch that will be assembled here a week from
tonight.

While at Arenbourg about 2 p.m., the Dark Duke passed by
to lend me a hand at some tree felling. He was entranced over
the morning rain since he and his brothers in law and Dee Dee had
just completed setting out their sweet potato slips and the
rain put the seal of perfection on the job. This was the first
opportunity we had had to compare notes of the Drunken Duck
episode and as the Dark Duke has an unusually keen sense of
humor, he not only got a huge kick out of the main thread of
the tale but was quick to pin on some extra furbalows that
rounded out the whole piece with elegance and hilarity.

But devastation wrought on poultry by passing cars somehow
suggested to the Dark Duke that Little River would be an ideal
spot for the raising of water fowls since automobiles seldom
wander that far afield and the generous supply of water by a
stream that is sluggish and teeming with small fish and craw fish
ought to make it the ideal spot to undertake the husbanding of
swan, ibis and flamingoes. If Martha Robinson would only come
back from Maryland and stick to her Louisiana Historic Buildings
Foundation, I would stir her with a stick to get me some of the

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ESTATE OF JOHN H. HENRY, SR.

eggs she promised a year or so ago. The next time I see Mrs. B. Williams I shall bring up the matter of some peacock eggs, too. What with the success the Dark Duke has already had in raising geese, he might be expected to fare equally well with birds of rarer plumage and since the original investment would involve not much more than an occasional handful of corn, he couldn't go very far wrong.

Miss Myra has often spoken of her wish to obtain a white peacock for Devereux, one like that most elegant of birds that graces the park at Warwick Castle. As the Williams have a representative of this feathered aristocrat, I must see if I can't get a couple of eggs for the Dark Duke to sit on. In South Carolina and in Louisiana I have often seen the white steak of an egret or a crane, flapping silently along the gray green corridors of some moss choked bayou but in spite of this suggestion, I still find it difficult to imagine what it would be like to witness a huge white peacock in full flight along the same course.

Activities in the gardens at Melrose and Arenbourg have made me so sleepy tonight that I shall not get around to finish Mr. Hardy's Tess, although I have but a single record to pursue in bringing the story to an end. Fortunately the ways of the characters are so dumb that this reader at least doesn't feel the least concern as to how their history pans out and so I shall have no regret in folding up my beard with complete indifference as to how the heroine and her companions, for I guess there is no hero in the book make an end to the business.

I have to hand a volume entitled How To Read The Bible, by Goodspeed, and I shall turn to that next. After stumbling around in the Holy Writ all these years, I am glad to be instructed as to how the thing should be done with Goodspeed, so to speak.

I must write Dora a note on Art Appreciation as reflected by popular taste at Melrose, and I am sure he will get a great kick on learning that the merchant planter has asked for an obtained a landscape by one Clemence Hunter which he is having framed with a view to hanging in his office. I am glad both for Clemence and for J. H. that this has come to pass, but I must say I cannot help but ponder as to why it often takes so long for such manifestations as come from such an artist to make a dent in the public mind, especially that section of the public living closest to the artist.

I believe Don Worsley's mother, brother and aunt are arriving from California for a stay of a couple of weeks with their kinsmen in Natchitoches, and so I reckon I may have a tour in the offing, which I shall welcome, for it does seem as though I don't see the lady doctor and all very often during these busy days.....

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Sunday, June 26th, 1949.

All day Saturday a hot but humid sun. All day Sunday at noon sun at all but ample drizzles. As from March 30th until this approach to the end of June, except for a dry May, the birthday magnolias have certainly had a break, and should any dry hurdle develop as from here on out for the balance of the summer, it must be admitted that things at Arenbourg this season really got a break.

All in all, I have had a pleasant week end for Saturday's pilgrims did not exceed three or four and the Sunday rain frightened most of the usual road runners under cover. Dr. Rand and Mack White, Mrs. Rand's brother, passed this way on Sunday morning, asking me to dine with them at the camp of which I did and liked. But I didn't remain long for I was expecting a lady pilgrim of yesterday to return for her spectacles which she had left here, and besides I wanted to dig some bananas for Mrs. Rand while it was still raining, they ooze out of the ground so much more readily.

Mrs. Rand inquired about the possibility of lending me her little dachund for a while this summer and I replied affirmatively. She is bringing him this week and I shall be delighted to have him, although I suspect that he will probably prefer staying with Charlie next door, and I feel certain Charlie will be happy about a new play mate since Charlie seems lonesome now that Dora has gone. Last night I got caught up a little on my reading a little and with the Hardy volume out of the way, I undertook a few chapters in the Goodspeed recommendation as to How To Read the Bible, and like it much. I thought the author made a book point when he explained that the Bible is made up of almost a whole library of various type of books on a vast scale of subjects and that it would seem odd indeed if anyone intent on reading at length should undertake the reading of a library by starting in at the first book on the top shelf and continue book after book until he had completed the whole collection. I imagine many a reader of the Goodspeed book will probably make copious notes on the fly leaves of their printed Bibles, for there is a wealth of suggestion as to where one will find one thing or another and where else a continuity of the same subject scattered about through the book may be read.

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Before reading the present volume I had not realized that up until about 1900 and especially 1929, our knowledge about the kingdoms of Assyria, Babylonia, etc., depended almost exclusively on the Bible, since it was not until after the turn of the 20th century that the records of the kingdoms of the East were uncovered and deciphered, thus confirming data appearing in the Bible and enlarging upon it considerably. I guess I didn't know before, too, that the Ten Commandments are set down not once but twice in the Bible and that there is a slight difference in the word arrangement in these two versions. I seldom read books of this type that I don't regret the tomfoolery of contemporary school children having to study Greek and Latin when so many subjects so much more vital to their understanding of life in general might be required in place of the dead languages.

I chatted for a few minutes this noon with Pat whom I shall probably not see again before he takes off at 5 in the morning for South Texas. He told me he and his mother are borrowing a car, some kind of an Army thing, I believe, and I believe are expecting to spend some time both in the mountains and at the seashore in Mexico somewhere South of the border, but I am not sure just where. I am so glad they can have this little outing together. I have always regretted Eugenia's failure to ever write to any of her friends at Melrose where she had many, either during her marriage to Joe or after their divorce. I shall always feel it was the gravest short sightedness on her part but then I have never understood her attitude on two or three points, and her failure to ever write, even to acknowledge gifts, etc., is something that shouldn't impell me to sit up nights about since I shall never understand it anyway.

But any explanation of the ways of people is equally difficult for me in the realm of plants. On Saturday morning I spent quite a while urging along the crepe myrtles at Arenbourg and on leaving there, instead of coming directly to Yucca, I continued down the public road to the Post Office. Accordingly I passed the site of last year's garage where I had set out, but hopelessly, some crepe myrtles this Spring, although the years of traffic about the place made digging holes impossible, so that in several instances I merely took handfuls of dirt and placed around the crepe myrtle roots, as a mere gesture and nothing else. And now the results are striking, for at Arenbourg most of those I set out under most favorable conditions and in lush soil are growing along but with unusual conservatism while those little old things that I cast on the flint like surface of the soil at the garage are in full flower. And more than that, the white crepe myrtles are twice as difficult to raise as the red ones and yet there are fine large white blossoms spilling all over the garage site and the young plants looking as sturdy as something Jack in the bean stalk might have contrived. I used to think sweet olives were the limit in contrariness but these crepe myrtles are pure sights.....

1738

3670

Monday, May 27th, 1949.

Memorandum

All sunny above ground, all wet under foot.

According to report, it was among the more quiet week ends up and down the river, with no one attempting to get in the way of flying beer bottles and no one trying to provide surface for flashing razors.

And yet in spite of this quietude, only a few people showed up for work this morning, either on the assumption that yesterday's rains obliterated plantation work or perhaps on the general principal that if the honkey tonk is good on Saturday nights it ought to be even better on Monday mornings.

But by noon 8 or 10 men had appeared and so J. H. gave them all to me this afternoon and gardening went on at a fair pace, if cutting weeds and chopping down grass can be termed gardening.

The only two bits of gossip I heard over the week end was or were revolving about my secretary whose wife has returned to the family hearth stone and on a broader plane, Teddy Baranowski appeared in Alfred's honkey tonk Saturday night, following a hurried return from New York, saying that he had come back preparatory to leaving for Manhattan again this coming Wednesday to make his permanent home in the metropolis.

I did a little more reading last night and am still delighted with How To Read The Bible, but was a little jarred when the author quoted a well known line from the Good Book, indicating that he was using not the King James version but some other rendition. He mentioned some line, I think from Judges, which I did not recognize, but Judges was never one of my favorite books and so it is not surprising that the quotation sounded new to me, and it is possible, too, that the King James version may not have the line exactly as given in this work. Be that as it may, the words were used in reference to evil doers who quote like wolves of the night, yearn not for the morn, unquote, and I like the line.

The chapter on Revelations presents a very sane picture of and a section of the Bible that always was beyond my comprehension, and I am glad to have the author's explanation of the historical situations leading up to an enunciation of a Revelation by one writer or another, for in so doing he makes it ever so clear how what otherwise seems like a lot of hocus pokus was in reality nothing more than an attempt on the part of the local prophet to lend faith and cheer to this religious group or that when Rome or Babylonia or whichever invader seemed to be on the brink of snuffing out the Hebrews or the Christians.

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I must admit that Miss Kate Perkins is perfectly right in referring to my letters as book reviews, but in spite of that fault, I do want to mention just one more thing in How To Read the Bible. At the end of the book is given an historical account in chronological order of how or rather when the various books were written and then some particulars regarding early publications in print form. One Bible, published in the middle 1500's, was called the Britches Bible, which certainly seems odd. It seems some of the Puritans who had fled England for Geneva, Switzerland, translated their own rendition into English, and into it in speaking of the Garden of Eden, they explained that Adam and Eve did take fig tree leaves and with them sewed themselves britches. Isn't that wonderful, Eve in britches.

The Texas and Pacific Railroad seems to be augmenting its curious deliveries of mail to this area, reaching a climax today when no first class mail came at all. The two subscriptions the plantation has always carried for the New Orleans Times Picayune have been cancelled since the new time table on the T. and P. somehow tangles things up so that New Orleans papers get here two days after publication. What with the Shreveport papers arriving on the same date they are published, the hot off the griddle newspaper readers in these parts have no interest in the last year's bird's nests coming from the Crescent City press, and so doth trade languish.

While at the post office this morning, J. H. mentioned he had a couple of letters addressed to his Mother which had recently come to hand and I offered to take care of them. I shall knock some of them off tonight and the rest tomorrow. I was astonished when one addressed to him, as of March 5th, tumbled out. It was from a Herzog Cunningham, once of Cane River, now of Berkeley, California, asking that some pecaness be forwarded, and the Lord alone knows if they ever were or not.

Another one that struck my fancy was from Detroit, signed by one Johnette Simmons. Since neither Miss Nor Mrs. was appended, I take it Johnette must be a little man, but I must confess I never heard such a name for anybody.

It is pleasant to report there weren't any pilgrims to speak of today, and the only guest for dinner this noon was Mrs. Combs who passed this way about 11:15. What with Celeste still in South Louisiana, J. H. dines at the big house at noon, and I was glad that Mrs. Combs and he thus had an opportunity to talk, for the office she represents has never enjoyed great favor with the merchant planter and this afforded them an opportunity to discuss business over the dinner table rather than across his desk, and that is always a step in the right direction.

And so I must fold up this note and have a go at Johnette and all, and thence for some iced Tender Leaf, and thence to my downy couch....

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3672

Tuesday, June 28th, 1949.

Memorandum

Apparently the rains have passed the heat and humidity linger on.

So do the pilgrims.

And today I had too many, what with trying to restrain a dozen workmen from cutting down magnolias and trying to direct their axes to baby pecaness in the Melrose gardens.

During the morning, I was deflected from my horticultural course by a bevy of women from North Louisiana, and although all a drip and looking generally disreputable, I undertook a tour although it was probably the only charitable thing I had done thus far since sun up, and true charity it was, since my instincts and wishes were to remain with the labor gang.

As is my custom in undertaking to show people about, I asked them if they were acquainted with the history of Melrose, which they were not, and so I tried to give them a two minute sketch of its inception and progression, to make the whole thing, as I thought, a little more understandable. But you can picture my surprise, after completing my spiel, when one of them asked me if any members of the Henry family were still living, and when I allowed as how there were a few, she asked if it would be possible to have the name and address of one or the other of them in order that she might eventually contact them with a view of learning something about the history of Melrose. I found that sheer inspirational, and since she is a resident of North Louisiana, I experienced great satisfaction in writing out Sister's name and address for her.

You can see readily enough how lasting was the quidity of my vaunted charity for that day.

I saw Celeste and Madam Regard for a few moments, and they report that the week end frolic was a great success, wonderful clothes seen, wonderful food eaten and so on.

I was interested, however, in one person Celeste mentioned, the lady who owns the plantation in New Iberia from whom Betty Regard purchased a few acres to build her home. This lady is a cousin of Dr. Butler and mentioned many things to Celeste about Laurel Hill which she used to know as a child when she used to spend her summers there playing with "little Pierce".

3673

And this lady has a sister who through the unexpected circumstance as to the place of her birth has some claim to fame. It seems the prospective Mother of the child had made arrangements to have her lying in take place in New Orleans, and as the day appeared to be approaching for the old stork to flap in her direction, she flagged down the steamboat, none other than the famous old Robert E. Lee, and boarded the same from the Crescent City. But, lo, the old bird although contending with the speediest steambot on the Mississippi, had no difficulty in winning over the winner and so the little girl was born aboard the victor of the famous Natchez race, and so becomes so far as I know the only child ever to be born on a river steam which ordinarily when passengers were ill, came to a half almost any old place, and deposited their patient at some plantation home which, as you know, were seldom out of sight of river boats.

As Celeste planned to spend the afternoon in town, I accept Madam Regard's invitation to pass by around 4 in the afternoon to have a little chat with her, but before I was done with encumbering pilgrims and the labor force, it was nearly 8, and so instead of having a cup of tea with Madam Regard, I had some ice cream with her, since she was just finishing her supper when I arrived.

Quite aside from the usual pilgrim groups came two different sets of professors from the College, asking in one case for information about the annual Spring Tournaments which were once a feature of this region, something in the nature of Spring festivals which, for no apparent reason, had a mixture of medieval overtones, such as horsemanship in gaily bedecked trappings who contended for the honor of crowning a May Queen and such like. And the other set of professors sought data on the cultivation of indigo in this area in the period between the clearing of the forests and the advent of cotton culture.

I guess the professors went away happy and so did some of my colored friends who passed this way for one thing or another, the Dark Duke coming up on his steed from Little River to bring me some sweet potato slips, which seems to be the most elegant tribute he could think of offering at this season, and which I shall plant as a gesture of courtesy although I shall have little opportunity to concentrate on caring for them and shall end up by raising a bigger crop, probably that if I had longed to beget some extraordinary yams. And Little King sawm Cane River, his cigarettes balanced on the top of his head, having seen me at work on the far margin of the river, and hoping that I might be able to suggest some place where he could locate an electric fan for his wife who seems to be suffering greatly from heat in her present state of pregnancy.

But all this enumeration has small excuse, save to indicate the concentration and variation of matters claiming one's attention, and I am perfectly aware that you are bound to have more interesting things demanding your own time, and so I close forthwith....

3674

Wednesday
Thursday, June 29th, 1949.

Memorandum

It is possible I wrote the date on this note twice, and if so, I charge it off to pilgrims who came belatedly and let only after the new moon had started swinging low over the old magnolia in the white garden.

And it has been a day of pilgrims and more pilgrims, and heat and more heat, and I feel alright in spite of both.

Mrs. Rand and three ladies passed this way this morning about 11, and I was glad of an excuse to suspend operations on the river bank where I had been gardening wholeslax since early early. During the past three years, an infinite number of willows had grown to some twenty or thirty feet in height, screening the river from Melrose, and these plus other rank growth had to be felled today while the master was in New Orleans and I could round up a goodly number of axes before he returns and makes the ebony arms forego such instruments for the lowly hoe.

Mrs. Rand brought me an elegant black dachhund with a pedigree miles long. She explained that he had occasioned them much regret by killing the prize cats of one of their neighbors and accordingly sought a fine home in the country for him with me. It is curious in a way she never thought about my cats but you know how it is, one has to be born in the North to understand white people.

And so Hans graced my front gallery for the balance of the morning after I had given the ladies coffee and sent them on their way to the camp where I joined them for dinner at 12:30. Hans was as busy as a bee in a tar bucket all the time, chasing my cats, great and small up and down the gallery. I tried to introduce him to Celeste's dashund, Charlie, but somehow the two didn't fuse. And so I went on my way, leaving him to worry my cats while I dined in elegance at the camp.

Back home at 2, I discovered all my cats to be still intact and Hans still barking at them madly, and so I went on to my crew who were felling trees with skill and speed. But my stay wasn't long for the clerk came to say that pilgrims had arrived and on my way to the front garden, I encountered Paynie, just returned from Toure Infirmary in New Orleans, seeming the better for his rest and probably relieved that he will not require an operation for his high blood pressure.

1538

3675

There seems to be a meeting of the State Health Board in Natchitoches and in consequence thereof, I found myself all tangled up with that branch of human endeavor, pilgrimage bent. And before the first batch had flown a second blew in, and before the latter had departed Mrs. Rand and her friends came to stroll through the gardens and to view the mulatto portraits at Yucca which they had skipped this morning. Hans continued to worry the kittens on the gallery and paid not the slightest attention to his old Mistress.

While we were viewing the portraits, the lady doctor arrived, but merely said Howdy to the Rand contingent and I left the latter momentarily to greet the Worsleys on the gallery, Don, his Mother, brother, and aunt, and in the midst of things the dachhund took a pass at a cat and discovered that Melrose cats are luckier than Alexandria ones and the ensuing racket was tremendous, with Hans finally doing the backing up. I sent the Worsleys over to view the big house for themselves and returned to the Rands, explaining in response to their inquiries as to what the racket had been all about.

And a little later the Rand group departed and I joined the Worsleys in the big house and thence came over here for a little sitting, and on their way out presented them with the find dachhund to have and to hold as their own. And so small is peaceful on my gallery tonight and however things are in the medical section at Melrose, or rather Natchitoches, I am sure the the dachhund has a splendid home and the Natchitoches feline societies will have to look to their own laurels.

Mrs. Rand told me that Clarence Pierson tried to commit suicide this morning by shooting himself in the head with a rifle, and although he was very seriously wounded, Dr. Rand wasn't sure if he would live or not, the bullet having passed through his head. You may recall him as Miss Sally's nephew, the one with the shrewish wife both of whom came to Melrose in a drunken condition on Sunday afternoon a year or two ago, only to be put out before they got too comfortably established. If die Clarence must, I certainly hope he will accomplish his end so that the funeral will fall on the 4th of July and thus knock the im ending party of Hertzog Island into the middle of next week.

It was after six before I got a chance to pass by Madam Regard's and I wanted to do so as Celeste was at a party somewhere or other and her Mother alone. By a skip and a jump I managed that and to get to the river bank before my deserted crew had dropped their final willow, and so to supper on their part and mine. Thence home and a much and long over due bath and a start at a little chat with you, when lo! more pilgrims appeared, and after that it was dark, and eventually here we are at last. While in the act of turning this page, Peter passed by, on his way to the honkey-tonk and said he had passed my secretary leaving the white garden as he entered. He must have tapped on my window while my boudoir was void and I was entangled with pilgrims or my tub. And just to think how sorry people feel for me because they realize how lonely I must be.....

1538

3676

Thursday, June 30th, 1949.

Memorandum
The weather continues wonderfully hot and humid, and the pilgrims continue wonderfully.

The postman passed this way an hour earlier this morning and everything else throughout the day unfolded about an hour in advance. I am glad the New Orleans Public sent me without my request the Lecomte de Nouy's Human Destiny which I had read some months ago for there were two or three things I wanted to re read and thanks to the obituary note you sent me some time back the man as an individual gives greater interest to his printed work.

I saw Celeste for coffee this morning. She was greatly puzzled that I should have given away such a beautiful dachhund. She saw the lady doctor at some party along about sundown and the dog was sticking closer than a brother to her and she was entranced with him but like Celeste, couldn't figure out how I came to give her such a beautiful animal. I reckon the Rands will be puzzled by the same question while I, in turn, am equally so as to why they gave him to me. And so the question goes 'round and 'round, like a dog, shall we say, chasing its tail.

And Celeste was puzzled by another matter, as to why I hadn't given my complete assurance that I would spend the 4th from morn' til night at Miss Sally's island camp for the 4th of July picnic. Having declared that she thought a party was the thing in this world she liked best, she couldn't imagine why I, too, shouldn't hail the opportunity with boundless enthusiasm. She asked Madam Regard if she had any idea how such a thing could be to which the latter responded that one key might be found in the fact that Celeste and Francois were not identical in their personalities, but so far as Celeste was concerned, that shed no light on the matter at all. Poor Celeste.

What with the day being Thursday, Dr. Knipmayer came by and we sampled the Taylor's Port which Mrs. Rand had brought me yesterday. Dr. K. says that our old patient, Boy Balthazar was removed to the Pineville, La., hospital for mental cases yesterday following an attempt at suicide by said Balthazar. I hope the Pineville residence may be a permanent one. The doctor told me too that Miss Sally has given up the idea of having a frolic on her island on July 4th, and she will not mount her litter and make a royal progress from Magnolia to the sylvan glade as in former years, and so the Knipmayers will shoot their firecrackers somewhere else and the Holy Ghost fathers from St. Augustin will have to search elsewhere for entertainment on Monday. From other shreds of information from the store, I take it that only the Worsleys, theyounger

3677

Hertzogs, Celeste and I will be expected. I know not if the Beaumont and Baton Rouge Henrys will be bidden but assume not.

Dan Henry is entertaining all the Henrys on Saturday night at his new home in town and I, of course, will be expected to attend, "being one of them". But like the Madam who used to love telling them that she was no kin to the Henrys, so I shall claim kinship to her, and so decline that frolic, too. I used to think the difference between New York and other places lay in the fact that in New York one always had to study what he could get out of doing. I hope such a circumstance never develops in these parts.

You will get the usual kick out of the enclosed stupidity. Being quite indifferent as to who reads me letters from that quarter I engaged Dr. Knipmayer to run through this one with me and we both got quite a kick out of it. I like the pedicote and similar renditions. Like Eddy Suydam, following his visit with esdames Smith at Asphodel, I have seen it and I still don't believe it.

Today my conscious slave driving of yesterday was salved a little by proof presented by absence of a force that one had better strike while the iron is hot. The merchant planter returned during the night from New Orleans and although I had grabbed off a dozen men at sunrise to complete the main outlines of willow feeling and general beautification of the gardens spilling over on to the margin of Cane River, I was not very surprised to see the crew gradually dissolve before my eyes, and by 7:30 or 8 a.m., every mother's son had been appropriated to lend a hand at this or that in the cotton fields and the beautification program was at a complete standstill. My first impulse was to go ahead and put a couple of finishing touches on a few things that wouldn't have required too much labor, but on second thought I came to the conclusion that if I had any extra energy to expend on gardening in weather such as obtains at present, I would just as well "sweat it out" on Arenbourg, which I did, and felt well repayed, spelled curiously enough, for the effort.

The Johnson grass that Peter ploughed under about three weeks ago has already climbed again to well over my head, and I am hoping that by Saturday I may again get the ploughs to turning on the terrace. Everything needs hoeing ever so badly, but in spite of that, the individual trees are looking very well.

My radio went out of whack a few days back and so I am quite in ignorance as to what goes on ~~the~~ in the outside world, but I can guess the pattern fairly well, and like the characters in the Hilton novel who were contented to read newspapers decades behind time, with the world moved outside their restricted domain, so am I content momentarily with the same arrangement, although when gardening lets up a little I shall be yearning for outside doings.....

3678

Friday, July 1st, 1949.

Memorandum
More rain and heat for our side of the fence which delights my soul.

I slept but fitfully last night and was glad to get going again this morning at a quarter of four, which is certainly a ridiculous hour, and since dawn hadn't streaked the East, I fiddled around with Human Destiny until nearly 5 when I headed out for Arenbourg. But my labors were limited what with a huge shower that began cascading earthward just as I arrived, and so I returned to Melrose for some bacon and eggs by which time the rain had ceased and I went back to hammer away at some weeds until 9.

When posting my letters, a telephone call came for me from Alexandria. It was Mrs. Rand, asking me to send Zelma a message that the Shreveport grandchildren would not be down for the week end as the Whitfield Jacks were under the weather. Mrs. Rand asked me if I had any cats left and I told her they were all intact, and lying, I said that as the dog had kept them pretty busy barking at them during the night and as the General was arriving today with his ancient bull dog who always ran off Dora in the old days, I had sent Hans visiting in town at the Worsleys. That is one visit, I think, that will be of a lasting nature. And just as I had disconnected the Alexandria call, Don Worsley gave me a ring to say that his family including their little dog, united in enchantment over the dachhund and that they are taking him to New Orleans with them this week end. That ought to be a relief to potential dachhund victims in Natchitoches any way.

The Baton Rouge Henrys arrived about 6 in time for supper, but the day had been ever so busy before they arrived.

Mrs. Combs brought my new Reading Machine about 2 o'clock, and just as she reached the Yucca gallery, the heavens opened up again for another good shower, and as soon as it slackened, she dashed for her car and made it just as a third downpour began. All in all it was an excellent day for the birthday maganollis, and tonight although a young moon is sailing bravely through some filmy clouds, it is occasionally blotted out by inordinate flashes of lightning off to the North, and thus I take it there will be no water shortage this week end.

3679

I saw Celeste for a few minutes this morning and she reported the arrival of some nice new thick thick honey from some lady in town so that the humming birds are just on the point of getting a square meal, regardless of local dustings of D. D. T in their usual food centers. I passed by the house next door this afternoon with a view to rigging up our respective bottles but learned from Madam Regard that Celeste was at a bridge party in town, and so the humming birds will have to await their banquet until the morrow.

Madam Regard expressed her amazement at the mania her daughter manifests for parties, some days witnessing two in the afternoon and sometimes one in the morning to boot. Anything to kill time, but I decline the instrument for killing it would certainly have lain better men than I low long ere this, had they tried to keep abreast with the Harper's Bazaar number.

After supper tonight the General and J. H. tried to get me to go over to the house across the fence for an evening of chatter, but I maintained my accustomed routine and declined in favor of the quiet of Yucca. How right was John Howard Payne when he wrote those immortal three words: Home Sweet Home.

Belatedly I return the correspondence you were so kind as to share with me some time back. The enclosure from Dr. Overdyke isn't of much interest, but I send it along regardless. Apparently the Overdykes will be heading this way soon, and I am hoping they may chance to breeze in some day that the Rand Postell sittings are in full swing, for I think such a meeting of minds would find sympathetic chords all over the place. I think of it, I must mention a book Madam Regard is reading. The title is Woman with a Sword and is by Hollister Noble. I believe it is a 1949 Doubleday publication. It seems to have to do with some lady of the Carroll family of the Baltimore area and swinging around the Civil War years. The name of Doubleday as publisher of an historical study sounds a little dubious but I thought I would mention the item regardless.

I was glad to learn from J. H. tonight that the new cement highway between Cloutierville and Monette's Ferry is to be opened within the next six days. This ten mile stretch was one of the Huey Long monuments to political chicanery. Once the neighborhood failed to give the King Fish a large vote and accordingly when the cement highway linking New Orleans with Shreveport was constructed during his regime, he made the Highway Department skip this stretch by way of an example to the traveling public, for the residents of the region probably used the road comparatively little in contrast to the people who were journeying several hundred miles along this route. I am so glad it is at long last been constructed, and especially for the Rands who will now find it ever so simple to slide along between Melrose and Alexandria. I have a feeling you have been bogged down with company of late, and I am hoping this 4th of July week end may afford you gobs of respite.....

3680

Sunday, July 3, 1949

How thoughtful of you to send the airmail which reached me in Saturday's post. It is good to be reassured you are alright, although I must confess I suspect you are bound to be about played out by all the social doings attendant upon your guests from South of the border.

I am glad you are not trying to attend to personal correspondence under such pressure and the realization that you are conserving strength by letting that ranch go pleases me no end. Nothing lasts forever and your guests are bound to desert you eventually, when an opportunity will then present itself to take typewriter in hand. In the meantime be assured that I shall understand perfectly and shall rejoice at your silence because the absence of mail tells me that you are doing what you can to take care of your own good self. And that is the most important thing of all.

Marvelous to relate we have been comparatively free of pilgrims during the past two days, although from a purely social viewpoint my activities seem to be fully as concentrated in spite of the absence of the road runners.

But it has been a pleasure to see the Baton Rouge and Beaumont sections of the clan and I seem to have had more contact with the sepia section than usual, which I have been able to sandwich in thus far at least without any friction on either side.

Thanks to the grace of God and the benefit of our birthday magnolias it has drizzled all this Sunday afternoon and that usually keeps us free from too many family visits.

The General will come to have a sitting with me for an hour in the morning. Joe came today and expressed delight with many things he had observed since his arrival.

Last night there was a party at Dan's in town but I declined my invitation. Tonight there is one at Payne's, and I have declined that, too.

Joe tells me that at a family meeting yesterday two or three observations were made that are interesting, so far as they touch on my presence. These seemed to be, that had it not been for my presence, Melrose would have been closed following the Madam's death, and with the closing of the big house, the Yucca and African houses would probably have been taken down and secondly, that it is the opinion of some members of the family that Melrose needs me much more than I need it. And if that is the way some of the members feel about it, I am quite

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content to let them stagger along in that viewpoint.

Dinner was pleasant today with all the family there, except the Shreveport outfit. Conversation was fairly good and subjects touched on were sufficiently varied. Among other things I learned was that the General risked six hundred dollars and lost on bets at the Derby at Churchill Downs in May.

The General's wife tends toward social attractions while the General is interested in the individual and not in his financial status. I was amused when I learned that after some time had elapsed from their advent in Baton Rouge they were bidden to the home of a friend of mine where I had visited on occasion a few years back. The General seems to take it as a matter of course, while his spouse couldn't wait until she had speculated on their invitation to a cocktail party and was dying to find out how it was that I, who had not lived in Louisiana all my life, should be on such intimate terms with the people. I explained to her that that was precisely the reason no doubt. She seemed more puzzled than ever while the General just threw back his head and laughed.

An attempt was made to set a date for me to visit the S.G.'s at some definite time in October, with the hope that I would arrange for the three of us to run up to Natchez as guests of Mrs. Ferriday Byrnes. I applauded the idea of the visit but indulged in shadow boxing when it came to setting a definite time. When I next visit Natchez, if ever, I hope it may not be with any Henrys.

The General told me he had noticed in the paper that Judge Armetsong who owns Magnolia Inn, Woodstock, Egypt, etc., has set aside considerable property with potential oil values running into fifty million dollars, for the benefit of Jefferson College. The General said he had seen it in some paper. I must write Mrs. Brandon in Atlanta tonight to inquire about this point. Surely she must have heard of it and will be delighted at the news.

Now if I could only see the judge and get him to include the Wailes home across the road from Jefferson in his project,

those who love and believe in Natchez and the S.G.'s would be entranced. I chatted with the judge the last time I was in Adams County but I reckon he wasn't dreaming of Jefferson at the time as nothing was mentioned by him or by my news releases subsequently that I can remember, and the General did not meet him when he attended a meeting of the Board some years ago when he was asked to head the institution.

Should you chance to have a copy of *Children of Strangers*, you will want to write a note in the front, indicating that the mulatto who was the actual heroine of the novel, Josephine Monette, died in Natchez this 3rd day of July, 1949. I guess her name was spelled Phemie or some such, if memory serves, but Josephine Monette was her real name, and I shall try to have further particulars on the morrow.....

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ESTATE OF JOHN H. HENRY

MERCHANT AND PLANTER

J. H. HENRY, AGENT

POSTOFFICE

SHIPPING POINT: MONTROSE, LA.

MELROSE, LA.

July 4th, Monday, 1949.

Memorandum

After writing you last night, I telephoned the Shreveport Office of the Associated Press, giving them particulars regarding the death of Josephine Monette. The first official I talked with considered the story of sufficient interest to assign a special writer to handle the matter, and so I dictated by long distance a rather complete account of the life and death of Lyle's favorite character.

I have jotted down some additional facts which I shall attach herewith, thinking you might want to transcribe them to be pasted in your copy of *Children of Strangers*, in whole or in part. It occurs to me that if you do not chance to have a copy of the novel, you might wish to append some of these notes to the back pages of *The Friends of Joe Gilmore*, since the end paper of the volume carries such a fine illustration of Yucca where Josephine lived for a number of years. As you know the bedroom referred to in the accompanying notes is situated where the set of windows and the door are shown at the left of the picture, while the bathroom occupies the space further to the left just behind the enclosed section of the gallery.

I had a telephone call from the Natchitoches Times this morning asking for additional particulars regarding Yucca, Melrose and Josephine Monette and a story was contrived over the telephone for special articles which may be used in its entirety in Louisiana papers, for it will be submitted to the New Orleans Times Picayune and The Item, the Baton Rouge papers, the Alexandria Town Talk, the Shreveport Times, etc., while the Associated Press coverage of the nation will probably obtain limited space for Josephine's death on a far wider front.

The Natchitoches Times told me that certain newspapers are so antiquated that they often reject stories carrying the slightest suggestion that individuals mentioned are of color, and so none of the papers in this section of the South may print a line.

Be that as it may, I at least have the satisfaction of having done what I could to record the story in American dailies, and later tonight I shall write a few brief stories for The Natchez Democrat, the Vaco Times Herald and so on, after which I shall probably pursue my efforts to create a legendary figure out of a real being who in life was already famous as a character of fiction.

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ESTATE OF JOHN H. HENRY

MERCHANT AND PLANTER

MELROSE, LA.

3683

For the most part, it was a quiet fourth of July in these parts. Another gentle rain last night, lasting over until mid mornin discouraged plantation work on Melrose although half a mile up the river not a drop has fallen in days and field hands are all over the cotton patches.

I had sittings with both the Baton Rouge and Beaumont Henrys before dinner, immediately after which they headed out for their respective homes.

The postman brought me the mallet of iron wood which Mr. Harness mentioned in his letter of yesterday. It is dark like mahogany, or perhaps like smoked hickory and seems to be as heavy as ebony or perhaps even weightier. The handle is about a foot long, and is so beautifully smoothed that it is a pleasure to pick it up. I immediately thought of Ezra and how well he can no re enact his skit of Judge Jones hammering the bench and screaming that this is a white man's world.

And no sooner had I thought of Ezra than he and his brother Jack stopped in at Yucca. Early early this morning my grapevine had registered a battle at Ezra's house last night, and how Doreatha looks I can't imagine but Ezra really shows scars of skirmish. His left arm is much bandaged between the wrist and elbow where he was struck by a poker and J. H. tells me he was cut considerably about the shoulders and bitten on the back. It must have been quite a tussle. Ezra's arm was paining him considerably and I gave him some anti pain pills for tonight in case he discovers he can't rest.

I had pilgrims, fortunately, when it was time for Celeste to leave for the party on Magnolia island and so I had an excellent excuse for not heading out then. J. H. and I had supper alone, and just as we were finishing, a couple of the Melrose priest, Kelly and O'Donald, appeared quite unexpectedly in the front garden, having been sent from the party by Celeste to pick me up. But again I demurred and Father Kelly said he was glad for he really wanted to waste considerable time at a mulatto bootlegger up the road before returning to the island, and since I didn't want him to drive me back, he would feel free to linger long at the grog shop.

Half an hour ago, as my fingers flew over the keys of this machine, my gaze riveted on the moon drenched white garden, there appeared a crack in the solid greenery of the bamboo hedge, through which two husky dusky figures stepped. It was Ezra, his arm in a sling, and his father in law, Dee Dee. They came from the Rand camp, where Dr. Rand had examined Ezra's arm and found a broken bone, which he thereupon set and by hand fashioned splints had those adjusted, dressed the ailing arm, and Ezra and Dee Dee had passed this way to tell me about the splendid man they thought the doctor to be. I must write him a letter of thanks forthwith, don't you think

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the two faces of the horse that he is likely to be found
Tuesday, July 5th, 1949.

Memorandum
Ascertain, the thickest I can remember, a curtain of rain, swept across Melrose and Arenbourg at 2 o'clock this afternoon. A half mile up the road and a half mile down the road there wasn't so much as a sprinkle. Surely there was never a summer so favorable for flowers and trees to climb to new glories. Surely the birthday magnolias are bound to become really and truly established before autumn reaches this bend of Cane River.

And while the cotton planters could find nothing good about today's downpour, you and I may find an additional factor in our study of the Cane River negro because of it. For had it not rained, most of the tractor drivers would have been busy and except for Ezra with his broken arm, Yucca might have lacked just the proper ingredient of social contact that would have brought forth the two little stories which I jotted down so hastily as they were being recited.

You will note from this rough transcription that there are a number of flaws and some omissions, one of which I recalled later, at Ezra's dictation, and jotted down on the back of the sheet.

Had I someone to read this back to me, I could readily put it in the couplet arrangement which characterized its original curde composition, but if you should care to make such a

rendition with the material at hand, you might find the final draft more comprehensible for casual reading.

So far as I know, this is the first time any piece of Cane River folk lore, and of all things, contrived in crude couplets, has ever been set down. As indicated on the notation accompanying the two stories, one is by Ezra whose education I believe ended with the 4th grade.

Like all true folk tales, it has to do with the episodes taking place in the day to day life of the peasantry. No doubt each story requires a bit of additional information to make the tale altogether clear but with a couple of phrases, I believe the thing would be quite apparent to such readers as might never have heard of the Cane River country.

The story about the horse that backed into Red River and so caused the negroes to loose their whiskey is fairly clear, I guess

1836

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The swiftness of the Red River currents explains by in the final lines the horse realizes that he is likely to be swept down river as far as Alexandria indicates that remote city, some 50 miles down stream as being the ultimate in distance that the story teller could imagine.

In the story about the killing of the hogs, one couplet is needed to explain that the plantation on which Mattie's brother, R. E. and Ezra both worked lay partly in Ward 9 and partly in Ward 10. Ward 9 represented the Melrose civilization and Ward 10 the Cloutierville community, always conscious of their respective differences. The point about the whole thing was that while the negroes were given free rein to slaughter hogs that might be trespassing on the plantation lying in Ward 9, they ended up by doing the job so well that they actually killed many of the animals who chanced to be on the Ward 10 side of the line but which in red ity were on the over the line section of the planta ton, the major part of which was in Ward 9, and were therefore slaughtering their own employer's pork.

There is another folk tale, composed locally, whose main line is "We will walk all over the land", a story that was written by one of my older friends as a kind of love song and reassurance to his wife during the height of the 1927 flood, when their cabin and all their possessions had been swept away, and he is trying to comfort her with the thought that before long they will both be back with their feet on dry ground.

I may be able to get the present ones and the others down in better form at some subsequent and chance sitting, but it has seemed to me better to send the accompanying one along in order that we may be sure they are one file for later arrangement, in case something should happen that circumstance should prevent re capturing them.

This machine played out yesterday morning and on examining the letters I had written the night before I found two of them were without proper addresses, and so your envelope was typed on a different machine, this one being put in order later in the day.

During the morning I had four long distance telephone calls from newspapers and wire services, asking for additional particulars regarding Josephine Monette, and during the day I knocked off some additional odds and ends regarding the Melrose and one River setting of Children of Strangers so that the obituary notices could be expanded to special articles for papers carrying to publish more lengthy accounts. With this machine and my other one carrying on at just that time, my labors were hampered a little, but I guess the main facts were pretty well covered.

Harper's Bazaar when first I encountered the same early this morning, seemed distressed over my failure to grace the Magnolia picnic, but I stifled the wail abruptly on the Bazaar' part and from then on, everything was lovely.....

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Wednesday, July 6th, 1949.
Memorandum
With water still in the cotton rows, today's setting of all blue and gold was obviously in order. The heat and humidity touched new highs and the birthday magnolias, not to mention the weeds, are doing ever so nicely at Arenbourg.

I knocked off quite a few notes last night before folding up my beard, all of them intended for people who might want to make notations in the Children of Strangers or their Gilmore books.

A couple of newspapers telephoned for further enlightenment and I stressed one point which seemed to catch hold of their imagination, to wit, that Yucca, after having housed Josephine for so many years, should have successively sheltered so many literary people down through the years. While chatting with one of the reporters, that line I quoted sometime back flitted through my brain, that it is a remarkable thing newspaper people seldom have any sense about the history they write from day to day, and one of them further impressed me by declaring he had never heard of Rose Franken or her plays such as Another Language or Claud Remarkable, isn't it.

Gardening today for me, and there wasn't too much of it, was little better than an opiate to deaden a slight headache and to reduce the picayune hurly burles swirling around the place, none of which were of the slightest importance but all of which taken together, or in regular succession, combined to make a fine gad fly, whatever that is.

And at least one thing taught me how good it is that some people adore parties and are true to their enthusiasms by not missing a day for weeks on end when one social function or another doesn't claim the major part of one's day.

Celeste didn't go to one before sundown, but I believe there is some kind of a forzen pickle festival up or down the river tonight.

The Rands came by to see me this afternoon about 4, using the side gate insight of the house next door. No sooner had my guests, and their Mr. Compton, a planter friend of Bayou Rapides, that Celeste appeared. I think the Rands weren't too interested in details as to how Dan Henry's house in town is furnished, etc., etc., and as I listened, it dawned on me that parties for some people are great rest periods for others.

3687

3687

My radio is still out of whack and accordingly I haven't heard a news broadcast for days, although if I would bother to pass by the store where one runs all day long, I might easily catch up on current events. What, if anything, ever came of the Judith Copeland spy business, I know not, and how the Hiss trial came out, if finished it is, I know not. I shall see Dr. Knipmeyer in the morning and have a quick resume of the world's doings at our morning sitting. Often it is said that psychologists fail to correct the mental quirks of their patients is because said patients enjoy their mal adjustments. I can't say that I delight in an absence of touch with current events but I guess I prefer that to the chatter of magpies and were a choice given me to decide if one party should be sacrificed in or er that a quarter of an hours breeze through the daily paper might be effected, if it meant having to pay for the same by listening to an extra quarter of an hour of nonsense, I would prefer the silence to the knowledge purchased at such a price. Curiously enough, the hot weather isn't really getting me down. It merely is hot weather and I just feel like blowing off a little steam. Poor you.

There is an interesting chapter in Human Destiny wherein the author elaborates a little on the story of Creation in the Bible. He reads into it that in making Man, God instituted a line of beings who by dint of exerting control over themselves and their surroundings, would in the end evolve into a spiritual state that would be one with God. He says that when God forbade His new creatures to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, He did so with complete understanding that His order or prohibition would not be obeyed, for by that very breaking of the command, Man began his long trek toward liberty and emancipation. And the author further suggests the Jesus was born about one million years, the figures are the author's, before His time, not only to provide men with a pattern but also with a hope that they might be on the right track which, if pursued with sufficient diligence, would evolve that same oneness with God that the Old Testament had promised. Interesting words, and especially from an erudite scientist.

It's a marvelous night and Grandpa keeps pulling at my screen door as a gentle hint he would as soon have me stop knocking on this machine and sit with him a while on the gallery. I shall accordingly raid the ice box in a few moments, rounding up some ice for my Tender Leaf and some milk for Grandpa, and together we shall take over the front gallery of Yucca, where a soft golden moon is glazing the dripping banana leaves a marvelously crusty glaze of silver. "The Heavens declare the glory of God" and Grandpa and I are going to investigate the matter and quietly applaud with quietness but decidedly with conviction.

News from up Manhattan way speaks frequently of a prolonged drought and accompanying hot weather. I do hope you are temporarily free of social demands and that your week end afforded a measure of relaxation for little you.....

3688

3688

Thursday, July 7th, 1949.

Memorandum

What an elegant fat letter the postman brought me this morning. Bless your heart for your industry and for the lovely things you had to say in your opening paragraph. And please never let a new day or a new week or a new month torment you with the thought of letters to be written in this direction, but rather rest assured that the telepathy department is working perfectly and that there is one thing that will always make me happier than letters from you, and that is the unwritten ones which you conserve for a later sitting when circumstances such as you have just been going through make it ever so much more important that you devote every free second, if any, to relaxation and rest. Then, eventually, circumstances will permit you to take pen in hand in due time, and when a message comes through I shall be the happier in the realization that you have really been doing the best you could to take care of you for our sake.

I am frankly staggered by all the pressure, physical and social, that has come your way during the past weeks. If everybody would just go home and stay there, how much easier it would be. And if colds wouldn't have a way of flitting in on the wings of an electric fan at the height of other pressure, and if health could only return to the associates and a relaxation from worry from loved ones.....well, that would make a perfect setting for Heaven, and while something greatly yearned for by all at some indefinite time, no one seems quite ready for final arrangements when it comes right down to it.

The moon was high over Melrose tonight before my secretary appeared. At sun down, the merchant planter decided the cotton should have a good dusting by tractor as the dew started forming, and dusting they did until after dark. Then several of the tractor operators, after shelving their machines, all made a bee line for Cane River into whose waters they plunged to wash away the sweat of the 102 degree day and at the same time eliminate the D. D. T. powder sticking to them during the dusting. I thought the idea an excellent one and applauded heartily at the news brought me by two ebony Apollos girded up with nothing but scant trousers, their black chests glistening from the particles of river water that still clung to them.

As I had an appointment to pass by to see Madam Regard for a few moments at 8:45, we were not able to finish your grand letter, and so it is tucked safely away in my armoire awaiting tomorrow night and I am as happy as two clams, what with tonight's chat and the

3689

2223C

promise of tomorrow's.

I have had a fairly busy day and haven't touched this machine on any other mail as yet, so I shall have quite a prolonged sitting tonight.

While I think of it, I will mention the fact that I have asked for a copy of Josephine Monette's birth or rather burial certificate, which I thought might contain some particulars regarding her family that you might care to attach to one of your Saxon books, or enter into your scrapbooks or some such. It will probably come through to me within four or five days and I shall pass it along. Some clippings regarding Josephine may also come to my notice, and if so, I shall of course pass them along as they are received.

I cut out a sheet of paper the size of the Children of Strangers volume and wrote particulars regarding Josephine's identity which I sent along to Essae Mae, expressing the thought that if all the dozens of Parish libraries in Louisiana having the volume on its shelves would care to paste in a notation along the line submitted it might increase the reader's interest in the volume. I know not if this be singing psalms to a dead mule, for it has often been that in the past when suggestions were headed in that direction, but whether it turns out that way or not, it is the effort that counts and not the accomplishment.

How wonderful of you to have found something so precisely to the point for me to pass along to Herr Powell. He has already headed for San Francisco, and I shall pen him a line immediately, for I know he will be entranced at the news of the forthcoming volume on Gen. Bank's Diastrous Red River Campaign. You are forever astonishing me by the patness with which you come up from Heaven with just the particulars I have merely touched on.

Mrs. Combs telephoned me this morning, saying that Celeste had asked her to come out to pick figs this afternoon and her 9 or 10 year old son had asked if he might come out to meet me. Naturally I gave a green light signal. They came before going to the figs and I invited him to take Melrose apart and put it back together with me which seemed to enchant him and at the same time it probably pleased his mother who was thus set free to pursue her fruit gathering without encumbrance. There must have been quite a build up before he arrived, for just as his mother was quitting Yucca for across the fence, the child was so delighted at the prospect of a gay afternoon that what with the excitement and a sulphur treatment he had lately received, he little puddle of water appeared unexpectedly, and, looking quite astonished, he said "I have already been to the bathroom without realizing it."

And so we sent his mother on to her fig business while he frolicked in the tub while I took off my long beard, and before he knew it his trousers were dry and he was having a swell time exploring the plantation.

1233C

3630

Friday, July 8th, 1949.

Memorandum

Today's pleasures came as no surprise, what with the guarantee tucked away in my armoire awaiting tonight's sitting.

How good of you and how thoughtful, in spite of the enervating heat and what might easily have been considered a holiday for you to have devoted so much time in sharing so many interesting particulars with me.

I should have realized the second installment of the McCall's articles were due to appear, but having heard no one mention them, of course, it is but natural that I should have forgotten the schedule, and so I am delighted to know that you have seen the issue and had an opportunity to run through some of the White House years.

And your excellent account of Miss Ney and her husband gives me such a clear concept of what her career was like, and I can but wonder what many a reader I know may have found in a book wherein so many important personages figure, with none of them meaning a thing, I imagine, to many of those who have read the book and told me how interesting they found it. How they can be interested, for example, in Elizabeth's association with Ludwig Deux de Bauviere, or Frau Cosima or the rest if such names registered much more vaguely in their minds probably than popular characters in the daily funny strips.

I must say it does seem odd that two such personalities should have betaken themselves to Texas where the Arts surely couldn't have received much patronage during the later half of the 19th century but that is perhaps one of the unaccountables that makes the volume interesting. I know nothing about Thomasville, Georgia, and it may have had the Savannah touch that would have made it more understandable, but as for Texas in those days for those artistic souls whose former associates had been so cultivated, surely the Lone Star State must at times have seemed a little barren in its wilderness.

And so you have by some miracle found time to have a go at the education of one H. Adams. I am glad you, too, liked his comparisons and contrasts of his respective grandfathers. Other sections of the book have other merits but no chapters, I think, hold more charm than do those dealing with his childhood, and such episodes as old John Q. grasping him firmly by the hand and marching off to school with him.

I have never been quite certain if he really omitted a 20 year period from the 1879's to the 1890's through design, or if it is merely, as I hope, withheld that portion of the manuscript from the publishers until after the death of some of the people appearing as important parts of his education during his married years, the suicide of his wife, or was it accidental death by an over dose

3691

of sleeping potions, and so on and so forth. Do you recall how
Madam Roosevelt in one of her books, perhaps in *This Is My Story*,
speaks of old Henry Adams calling at their Washington residence
during an illness of F. D. R.'s, and how several of the boisterous
Roosevelt children, Anna, Elliott, etc., if memory serves, clambered
up in the old man's carriage, thereby giving their mother a few
moments of uncertainty as to how much Mr. Adams would tolerate.

I suppose Henry must have kept a Diary, since all the Adams fa-
did but I don't seem to know anything about it. Perhaps something
is said about it in the James T. Adams volume on *The Adams Family*.
A card from Miss Kate this week, which I inadvertently threw out
reports that she is currently reading Henry's letters, I don't
know what the volume is entitled, and she reports them as showing
a sparkling wit, as was to be expected, of course. She also
remarks that he was very fond of his brother-in-law and the
latter's daughter, the brother in law being the brother of Mrs. Adam
but I have forgotten her name. I believe she was a Boston belle
possessed of considerable fortune, but not a peep about
such mundane matters appear in the education of course, although
ordinarily such matters would seem to be an integral part of
such a subject.

Apparently I have cooled off a little since yesterday for I see
ever so much more charitable for the lady across the fence, and
she, in turn, is undoubtedly her old self again, which is better
that way if such a status can be maintained without either of us
treading too heavily on the other's toes. Did I mention that
she was in town last night for a soiree at Dr. Eleanor's, the same
in honor of her mother-in-law who is visiting Don and Eleanor
during the current month. The lady, her sister, I guess, and
Don's brother drove from California, a trip which I really would
not have to make on purely family lines in such heat, but
if that is to their taste, I am all in favor of it for them.
Celeste had a great deal to tell me about the party and who said
what and which one sent this message and that to me, but I must tell
you in all honesty I cannot recall a single particular
these several hours afterward.

I think it was especially kind of you to lend me courage or
to ward off discouragement by recommending that I pay not attention
to the Arenbourg weeds just so long as everything is growing by
leaps and bounds. As for me, I did my bounding at 4:15 this
morning, and so got ahead of the sun. The Johnson grass, ploughed
under a month ago, is now over my head on the terrace, and I am mak-
ing no attempt to do anything about it, devoting myself exclusively to
giving breathing space to the birthday children and so on. Peter
is hoping to be able to dust cotton at dawn tomorrow and afterward
to do a bit of plough for us at Arenbourg, and that ought to take care
of a heap of things in one great big go-round.

May I say thanks again for your lovely letter, urging at the sa-
me time that you try not to write when things are so by 6's and 7's
and the weather so terrific, always knowing that I will understand..

3692

Sunday, July 10th, 1949.
Memorandum to the President of the Board of Directors
A quiet, hot, dry week end.

Usually the butterfly lilies begin blooming on the 8th,
but while several stalks are about to explode with dozens of
floral papillons, n'er a mariposa has unfolded a wing as yet.
Heaven knows the season has been favorable, but I suppose last
Winter's cold tended to set back the summer schedule a few
days.

The enclosure speaks for itself, along with a couple
of errors in the print, including the 1895 date of Melrose which
should, of course, read 1833. What is strange about the error
in the date is the fact that twice the Times office telephoned
to check up on this particular point, and then succeeded
in hitting the wrong final digit in the set up.

The excessive heat must have discouraged pilgrims, for they
were few, and when Dr. Rand passed by this morning to ask me to
dine with the family at the camp, I was glad I could chat with
him for a few minutes undisturbed. I declined his invitation to
dine with them, having already accepted Celeste's invitation, but
I strolled over for an hour between 2 and 3 to look over
Wm. Darby's Map of Louisiana and parts of the State of Mississippi,
under date of 1816. What makes this title interesting is the fact
that Mississippi didn't become a State until 1818, when the book
from which the map was taken was published, seeming to indicate
the map must have been given its title a couple of years after
it was charted. As the territories of Alabama are noted and the
province of Texas, the "State of Mississippi" seems to be something
definitely anachronistic. I believe this map is from *The Immigrant's
Guide*, which was lacking in our copy, if you recall. It has some
interesting particulars that may be forgotten historical facts
or errors, and I can't determine which. For example, immediately
above Natchez appears the word Livingston, suggesting that there was
a place by that name or that possibly Edward Livingston may have own
property there, but I never heard of the town by that name or
any of the Livingstons owning property of considerable extent in the
Natchez country. And another surprise is the name Narcisse Prudhon
written in at about the place where Monette's Ferry is today, some
20 miles South of Melrose, whereas, as you know, the contemporary
Beaufort plantation in the Bermuda area is the home place of the Nar-
Prudhommes.

I am hoping to have another go at the map with Dr. Rand who
loves to pour over such items, and what with Dr. Postell scheduled
for an appearance shortly, perhaps the three of us will have
an opportunity to explore the thing together.

3693

3693

Not until Saturday did I learn that on Monday an addition is to be started on the house across the fence, a bathroom extending further back of the present rear of the house. I am all in favor of such additional conveniences, since two baths in my house are better than one, but when all these extensions are complete the house will still be just what it has always been, simply nothing. It is another case in point of pinching pennies to the vanishing point on what I think important, and squandering hundreds and thousands on matters of but dubious merit.

In the mean time, the social whirl goes merrily along, with cards in town yesterday and cards today, and tonight the Reverend Holy Ghost Fathers from St. Augustin's across the river and so on and so forth. I was bidden to tonight's little domestic gathering but of course declined, for I am determined to maintain my nights of solitude and besides all the priests from the St. August Church whom I know are so pedantic they are stupid and were just made, I think, for the frolicsome matrons who seem to be entranced with their erudition.

On my way to the Rand camp this afternoon, I stopped off at Puny on the way to see if Dr. Rand had taken care of Ezra's arm. I found four or five "niggers" on Puny's gallery, laughing merrily and apparently impervious to the heat. Aside from Puny and Zelma, I found Ezra, the Dark Duke, Beau Mack and Taffy, whom I upbriaded for having failed to bring me my pair of baby skunks this year.

Dr. Rand had dressed Ezra's arm and found it had suffered some from wrenching, for Ezra, in spite of the use of but one arm, has been driving a tractor all week, the broken arm remaining in its sling, or "swing", as most of my septia friends are pleased to call it. Ezra is a stoic about having to keep the thing fixed and wearing splints and laughing remarked that like the ownership of an automobile, it isn't the initial cost but the up keep that is killing him.

There were Missouri and Arkansas pilgrims at Melrose between 3 and 5, completely destitute by the heat, and after they had gone, the Dark Duke, with just a suggestion of an edge on, passed by "to look at mama" for Victoria's most sentimental appeal is probably felt at such times. We chatted for half an hour and I wish I might have taken down the conversation, for Log was re-living his Italian campaign all over again, and the Italian phrases flowing so naturally from his powerful untutored lips was wonderful. I think he must have made the most of his time while "resting" in the Palace of the Duke of Modena, for surely during the days on the battlefield he never could have picked up so much.

When I sat down to this machine, I thought I had something interesting to pass along, but whatever it was has successfully eluded me, and so, after begging your pardon for the above dullness, I shall turn to a chapter of Humand Destiny and a bumper of Tender L.

3694

3694

Monday, July 11th, 1949.

Memorandum:

It is both futile and a waste of time to attempt to describe, explain or convey somethings in life. And one of these is just what I have done, - written you a gay Memorandum, only to discover on folding it for the envelope that the ribbon had jumped the track and not a single solitary letter had registered. Misere.....

But that was merely the perfect ending of a day which has probably been the hottest tis season, and one in which I, having no sense at all, undertook to do a billion things, and sweated them prtially through, and liked them.

Before 6 o'clock this morning, I had transplanted some large gardenias for Celeste to save hem from being mashed down by the new addition which was begun on her house today.

I never heard of any one successfully transplanting gardenias in July, since January is the month they may have a chance to make it. But since it was a case of death for them if left where they were, I thought moving them could have no worse effect on them, and there is always the million to one chance the might survive.

see transcript.

And then I decided it would be a wonderful time to begin converting the African House into something like a mulatto Museum, and so I took that in my stride, and while 50 sectional book cases were being emptied of their contents, cleaned, moved upstairs and re-filled, I collared Will Rogers, the best carpenter on Melrose, and had him hang me double door-blinds on the entrance of the East room giving on the gallery of Yucca, as indicated by Hyden in his sketch of the place on the Whistle Garden side. Three sides of this room are of door-blinds of combination, and to say's addition will give me an extra room in which I can stode many a tresor.

All a-drip during the morning, I jumped into a bath at 11:20, and no sooner did the tap run over me that someone tapped at my door. I screamed for my visitor to go into the boudoir and wait, for it was early a hundred on the gallery, and when I issued forth, I saw a hell, I discovered Mrs. Lomb had brought me three large boxes of clothing that had belonged to her several children.

1835

3695

at with the uncertain situation of the Little River
crop. I am glad to have these right now for they will
serve many a family between now and cotton picking time.

As dinner is at 11:30, I bade the lady break bread
with us as it was good to find Pat gracing the board, for
he had arrived from the Rio Grande and Mexico this morning.
He had visited the King and Armstrong ranches in South
Texas and had many interesting particulars to pass along,
and particularly about various aspects of cattle raising
for which those ranches are famous.

Today's post came little Marcel's "Swann's Way",
as read by your friend, Alexander Scourby. Frankly I
was surprised. When I think of how long I had to
work on old Xenophon to get the ball rolling, and then
the chance that the book might have been assigned to
the American Printing House for the Blind instead of
the American Foundation, and then, this is what I
always feared, that Alexander Scourby would not be
selected for the job, or might have terminated his
connection with the organization in favor of the stage
or radio. But, as Dr. Miller was want to phrase it,
"the nicest thing about miracles is that they really
do happen", and so, if I can detect any shadow of
a suggestion that this page carries any writing whatsoever
when I remove this sheet, I shall marshal out the Tender
Leaf, and investigate just how Mr. Scourby handles
little Marcel.

The enclosure, either herewith or under
separate cover, speak for themselves. You will enjoy
Helen Baldwin's, so crisp for a hot weather sitting.

For the other, it seems ever so friendly,
but I shall frown on any attempt to find a location
on Cane River and I shall not find it convenient to do
anything by way of research with the lady, for I
believe in keeping over the fence, and extra over the fence
interests quite separate from this side. It is true
that on occasion the Merchant Planter at Dan's behest
has shot some of my cats, but I am always kind to J. H.'s.
I do not expect him, however, to waste any of his time
on my feline companions and for my part expect to
spend none of mine on his.

And to a new week begins and if each day is as
busy as today's, I shall have some inkling of what
your exhaustion might have been like, when of late you had
business, domestic, health and social things all piled
on to of you at the same moment.....

Monday, July 11, 1949.

3696

.....
5th paragraph, and following:

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African House into something like a mulatto museum, and so I took that in
my stride, and while 50 sectional book cases were being emptied of their
contents, cleaned, moved upstairs and re-filled, I collared Will Rogers,
the best carpenter on Melrose, and had him hang some double door-blinds
on the entrance of the East room giving on the gallery of Yucca, as
indicated by Suydam in his sketch of the place on the White Garden side.
Three sides of this room are of door-blinds combination, and to-day's
addition will give me an extra room in which I can store many a tresor.

All a-drip during the morning, I jumped into a bath at 11:20, and no sooner
did the soap suds cover me that someone tapped at my door. I screamed for
my visitor to go into the boudoir and wait, for it was nearly a hundred
on the gallery, and when I issued forth from my sea shell, I discovered
Mrs. Comby who had brought me three large boxes of clothing that had
belonged to her several children.

What with the uncertain situation of the Little River crop, I am glad to
have these right now for they will serve many a family between now and
cotton picking time.

As dinner is at 11:30, I bade the lady break bread with us, and it was good
to find Pat gracing the board, for he had arrived from the Rio Grande
and Mexico this morning. He had visited the King and Armstrong ranches
in South Texas and had many interesting particulars to pass along, and
particularly about various aspects of cattle raising, for which those ranches
are famous.

In to-day's post came little Marcel's "Swann's Way", as read by your friend,
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to work on old Xenophon to get the ball rolling, and then the chance that the
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instead of the American Foundation, and then, this is what I
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I remove this sheet, I shall marshal out the Tender Leaf, and investigate
just how Mr. Scourby handles little Marcel.

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anything by way of research with the lady, for I believe in keeping over the
fence, and extra over the fence interests quite separate from this side.
It is true, that on occasion the Merchant Planter, at Dan's behest, has
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him, however, to waste any of his time on my feline companions, and I for
my part expect to spend none of mine on his.

And so a new week begins, and if each day is as busy as to-day's, I shall have
some inkling of what your exhaustion might have been like, when of late you
had business, domestic, health and social things all piled onto you at the
same moment...

see transcript.

8836

3697

Tuesday, July 12th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Many blessings all in one post, and let me
be a little late this morning. The postman
early, my envelopes, with enclosure, did not
mailed at all.

How nice to have your Thursday and Friday letters,
and the late, enchanted with hers from you, had the
to be, which told me a little, as I was then in my way
to the store, and thought it the late, too.

How nice that once more California roses, you
a week of restite, and I know you both deserve and
need it, that little bit of things that are good before. I
am "holding the thought" that you are taking the best of
the little things.

How nice to hear from the "hine" again. I
little's all less hilarious. I must look for it
line shortly, but probably shall not do it before catching
up on some of the stuff.

And thanks to the little of my wayward loyal Wilson.
It is out of back again and this machine is of little
account. I am hoping you have taken the subject matter.

The machine did not action when I was talking
about Josephine, and I had to add particulars, for
example that she lived for a number of years in the lecture
of Yucca which is now my bedroom and bath, which lightens
her spirit with any other soul concerned with literature
which is consequently been housed in the same building.

How lucky for you that you stumbled on the radio
page of the Rosebushes, here it is, so expectedly.
After an absence of a couple of weeks, my machine has
returned to the road, and today let it touch the
the outside world tonight, if and when....

In the mean time I have your two letters, and
that little bit. I am glad to learn the summer will
be to the Hurley House, even though still in an
understandable condition. And I am so glad to know
about the Washington, I will letter which I am
holding for tomorrow's little.

In mention of Louisiana by the interview, I thought that is't the way the author tells his tale. I used to have just been appointed resident of North Western State too, after appointment, of course, and thought about the influence of his wife's people who are said to be influential in the newspaper, and for some such name. I shall inquire about the book from the State, and ought to know if it is worth anything or not.

I put the finishing touches on the African House Museum today, and it looks rather nice. The second floor has an enormous treasure of French books, some interesting American text books and magazines, but I shall skip all reference to that. On the ground floor, I had all the stuff taken out and the lovely old brick floor hoed first, then swept, then a hose played on it, then much soap applied and no end of scrubbing. A few years ago it was used to store potatoes, the latter dumped on the floor and covered with loads of dirt & stove off frosts. Later hundreds of chickens, baby chicks, were raised on top the dirt. In time, the place was a mess. Now all is spick and span, the lovely old red brick walls and floor, one white washed wall where the stairs are enclosed, and the grand daisy press beams, now about 200 years old, I reckon. On the white washed wall, I hung a couple of portraits of colored folks. In the center of the wall stands an ancient secretary where pilgrims will be asked to inscribe their names. Just above it and a little to right and left, are a couple early hand tin or copper handle holders, simple, simple, and hand wrought by some forgotten slave blacksmith. A grass rug is spread in front of the secretary, while the chair in front of it is hand made and in natural wood, and has an interesting hand woven corn husk seat.

The North wall is centered by a loom and an old weaver's bench in front of it, while old Metoyer candle moulds are suspended from the ceiling above, a half dozen or more. The West all beginning at the North corner has early cast iron utensils for cooking, washing, etc., and a piece or two of solid copper, a Dutch oven for cooking biscuits before an open hearth, etc., and further along an old old spinning wheel, as high as your head. The South wall, as you know, contains the two openings and an armoire in between with half a dozen chairs scattered about, all of hand made natural wood and execution, and each different yet withal harmonious.

But I am going on at such a great rate that I neglected to tell you anything about the perfectly delicious Empire coffee table you and I have a Yucca, but that will save until tomorrow, and, I suspect, you will see it...

Memorandum

[illegible]

How nice, that once more California promises you a week of respite, and Heaven knows, you both deserve and need it, what with all the doing that has gone before. I am holding the thought, that you are making the most of the summer by doing nothing.

Wasn't it good to hear from the Rhine again. The jitters I hilarious. I must knock her off a line shortly, but probably shall not do so before catching up on some "must stuff".

And thanks for telling me of my wayward Royal ribbon. It is out of whack again and this machine is of little account, but I am hoping that you can make out some of the subject matter.

If the machine did not function when I was talking about Josephine, I shall be glad to add particulars, for example that she lived for a number of years in the section of Yucca which is now my bedroom and bath, which identifies her spirit with many another soul concerned with literature, which has subsequently been housed in the same building.

How lucky for you that you stumbled over the radio program of the Roosevelts, Mere et Fille, so unexpectedly. After an absence of a couple of weeks, my machine was returned today, and so may get in touch with the outside world tonight, if and when

In the meantime I have your two letters, and that provides much. I am so glad to learn the Summerwells are able to journey abroad, even though still in an uncertain ~~and~~ physical condition. And I am so glad to know about the Washington-Louis XVI letter which I am holding for tomorrow's sitting.

You mention to look up "Louisiana " by one McGintey, although that isn't the way the author spells his name, I guess. He has just been appointed President of North Western at Natchitoches,appointment, of course, and brought about by the influence of his wife's people who are said to be influential in the Shreveport area. Ward? or some such name. I shall inquire about the book from Miss Kate, who ought to know if it is worth anything or not.

I put the finishing touches on the African House Museum today, and it looks rather nice. The second floor has an enormous treasure of French books and some interesting American textbooks and magazines, but I shall skip all reference to that. On the ground floor, I had all the stuff taken out and the lovely old brick floor ~~hosed~~ first, then swept, then a hose played on it, then much soap applied and no end of scrubbing. A few years ago, it was used to store potatoes, the latter dumped on the floor and covered with loads of dirt to stave off frosts. Later hundreds of chickens, baby chicks, were raised on top ~~of~~ the dirt. In fine, the place was a mess. Now all is spick and span, the lovely old red brick walls and floor, one whitewashed wall, where the stairs are enclosed, and the grand cypress beams, now about 200 years old, I reckon. On the white washed wall, I hung a couple of portraits of colored folks. In the center of the wall stands an ancient secretary where pilgrims will be asked to inscribe their names. Just above it and a little to right and left, are a couple of early early tin or copper candle holders, simple.

3700

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3700

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How nice, that once more California promises you a better life than Heaven knows you both deserve and need it, what with all the doing that has been going on, I am going on as such a great rate that I neglected to tell you anything about the perfectly delicious Empire coffee table you and I have at Yucca, but that will save until tomorrow, and, I suspect, you will love it....

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How lucky for you that you stumbled over the radio program of the Roosevelt, where et filie, so unexpectedly. After an absence of a couple of weeks, my machine was returned today, and so may get in touch with the outside world tonight, if and when.....

In the meantime I have your two letters, and that provides much. I am so glad to learn the summer will be able to journey abroad, even though still in an uncertain physical condition. And I am so glad to know about the Washington-Louis XIV letter which I am holding for tomorrow's sitting.

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I put the finishing touches on the African House Museum today, and it looks rather nice. The second floor has an enormous treasure of French books and some interesting American textbooks and magazines, but I shall skip all reference to that. On the ground floor, I had all the stuff taken out and the lovely old brick floor polished first, then swept, then a hose played on it, then much soap applied and no end of scrubbing. A few years ago, it was used to store potatoes, the latter dumped on the floor and covered with loads of dirt to stave off frosts. Later hundreds of chickens, baby chicks, were raised on top of the dirt in the place was a mess. Now all is spick and span, the lovely old red brick walls and floor, one whitewashed wall, where the stairs are enclosed, and the grand cypress beams, now about 200 years old, I reckon. On the white washed wall, I hung a couple of portraits of colored folks. In the center of the wall stands an ancient secretary where pictures will be asked to inscribe their names. Just above it and a little to right and left, are a couple of early tin or copper candle holders, simple,

3701

Wednesday, July 13th, 1949.

Memorandum: In writing the date line, I came within an inch or less of putting the year as 1789, what with tomorrow being Bastille Day and my errant secretary just having faded into the night, after having read the letter from George Washington to Louis XVI, as of 1790, putting me thereby in a awfully ante revolution time bracket.

I certainly did enjoy the letter and the article about it and I thank you for having transcribed it for me.

I neglected to report in last night's Memor that a splendid shower passed this way about first dark, and pin point humidity was the order of the day during this morning, all to the good for the Arenbourg children. And because of the sower last night, the plantation did not work today and so Peter was able to do much ploughing this afternoon, and I shall have much trimming about the edges on the morrow, and several morrows following to catch the Johnson Grass before it goes to seed in the places the plough couldn't reach.

Quite unexpectedly, I was in town this morning from 10 to 11. It seems the dentist had sent word he would like to check up on the bridgework a little, and as Celeste was going to have hers cleaned, - and probably she stirred up my appointment, - I went along, glad of an opportunity to buy a couple of things at the general store, rubber hose for my shower, etc. As for the dentist, I told him I was glad of the opportunity to pay him a social visit but only as a concession would I let him peep into my mouth which he had contrived to make so uninteresting last Winter. And that is all he did do, and so I was glad to head back home again forthwith.

If memory serves, I think I promised to mention our lovely First Empire coffee table. It is rather small, possible 2 and a half feet long and perhaps a foot wide. I believe in some quarters this style of table was called Banjo. The legs and lines are pure First Empire, and the wood is mahogany. Undoubtedly it came to the Cane River country early in the 1800's, and it is doubtful if there were any tables of this type in quantity in the whole country at that period. I neglected

107E

3702

to mention that the height is so convenient, just about
knee high, and ever so pleasant does it look standing
before the sofa. I am not sure when coffee tables came
into fashion but suppose at a rather later epoch.
I might add that I suppose this elegant piece of
furniture was originally designed more with a view
of gracing my lady's boudoir than a plantation draw-
ing room, and while that is supposition, I cite one
fact to substantiate the assumption, to wit, if
by deftness and care, one knows how to remove the
beautifully smooth flat finished top of the table,
one discovers that hidden beneath is an elegant banjo-
shaped piece of pure white porcelain, carrying out the
thought that this perfect piece of severe bric-a-brac
conceals what is nothing less than a bidet that may
even have deceived the Emperor.

Don't you think that is wonderful.

transcribed.

Well, everyone I know, when eyes first light
on this magnificently simple masterpiece will fall
out with envy, and of course I shall never reveal
what lies concealed just below the neatly fitted table top,
and many a glass of wine or tea will be gently placed
on the coffee table by hands that would flutter in
sheer swooning, had they the vaguest idea what purpose
the piece originally was designed to serve. And the
last person to ever learn of it will be the lady over the
fence.

I may have speculated in the past as to why Marie
Therese Breville who became Madame Augustin Metoyer,
was always affectionately referred to as Madame Coin-Coin.
Once I thought the secret might be found in webbed feet
or some such, but as she was probably the first and
possibly only member of the mulatto nobility to possess
such an elegant piece of bric-a-brac as mentioned,
it may be that the presence of this unexpected piece
of liquid appurtenance may have given rise to the
nick name. In any event the table is ours and its
genuine classic beauty and its remarkable history
make it of unique interest.

My absence in town this morning and at Arenbourg this
afternoon impelled me to advise the store I would receive
no pilgrims and so the African House remains the unvisited
Museum.

I have read a couple of Mr. Scourby's pages of Swann's Way.
It is the most perfect recording anyone could imagine,
the quality of the writing and the rendition being in such
perfect harmony.

3703

Don't you think that is wonderful.

Well, everyone I know, when eyes first light on this
magnificently simple masterpiece will fall out with
envy, and of course I shall never reveal what lies
concealed just below the neatly fitted table top,
and many a glass of wine or tea will be gently placed
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I have read a couple of Mr. Scourby's pages of Swann's Way.
It is the most perfect recording anyone could imagine,
the quality of the writing and the rendition being in such
perfect harmony.

3704

Thursday, July 14th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Another tremendous hour of rain at noon today.

But as I was devoting myself to indoor activities it made not the slightest difference to me, and benefited the Arenbourg children no end. Also the weeds, no doubt.

The morning was rosey, and at 8 J.H. sent me four men, after asking me if I was inclined to further my museum innovations. I was.

But before I had set the wheels turning very smoothly, a message came announcing two gentlemen to see me. It was the New Orleans Laughlin with a Mr. Mark, I believe, who seems to have a fine town house of his own on Bayou St. Jean and is interested in architecture.

Mr. Laughlin tells me he is about to publish a photographic study on the iron and stone work of New Orleans. He says everyone is forever talking about the iron work but no one seems to have realized that the Crescent City has some really lovely sculptured things in marble. He says he has taken about one thousand one hundred pictures, from which he will select about one hundred for his photographic volume. It ought to be interesting.

The two then began photographing the front of the big house and from there passed to the one-time kitchen of plantation days, which was all they had time for today, as they were due back at home by 5 this afternoon. But those plans were abruptly altered when Mr. Laughlin came to the African House where I was busy having the things moved on the upper floor. He caught one look at the ground floor, and noting the lovely reds of the old bricks in them, he called to his companion to drop the kitchen and to scurry to the car to get all the colored film they had with them. They spent the balance of their morning engaged in recording that interior, enchanted with the setting. Several of the old utensils which were unknown to them, etc. etc.

After dinner, Celeste dropped in at the one-time kitchen, now the studio, to say howdy and asked if she might see the African House. What with the drizzle, I recommended the morrow, but she waived aside the elements, and so I walked over with her. She seemed to like the "new-old Look", and to my surprise, broke into tears. Damp outside, damp inside.

3705

She explained that she felt thus moved by the sight of the place and the pleasure which it would have afforded the Madam, had she ever seen it thus. She decided she would have to go straight home and drag over Madam Regard, but I put my foot down on that suggestion, what with the rain and the fact that I wanted to get to work. But it was nice to know she liked what she saw.

But while the bricks of the African House are pretty, I saw as colorful a vignette the other day as I shall ever run across, a study of red, white, black, and green and blue. Picture yourself a big old crepe myrtle, in its full glory of huge blossoms of watermelon red amongst its deep green foliage. The blue sky above was deep in a powdery blue sort of way. The trunk of the tree divided about three feet from the ground, - the two projecting trunks almost forming a giant Y with their soft gray-brown bark. Some gardeners were working just beyond, and tall, lithe Peter, passing that way, stopped to lean against the crepe myrtle, putting up his arms to carry out the Y shape of the tree. His ebony black arms and his back were bare, cut only by the sharp white of a sun helmet he was wearing. Faded blue cotton trousers was the only other garment he wore, svelt over his narrow hips and attenuated legs, below which his black feet rested softly on the green grass. I caught but a glimpse as I passed by along the garden path, a few feet behind him, and while the picture was but fleeting, it was one of the most satisfyingly colorful scenes I ever witnessed. If Theodore Rousseau would only have glimpsed that picture just once, or if George Barbier might only have etched in the lovely lines.

This is the first time I have seated myself today except at dinner and supper, and it has been good to have a little chat with you before beginning my correspondence. Oddly enough, I find myself possessed of the most perfect coordination in any Talking Books ever created, Scourby doing Swann, and yet I inevitably fall asleep before I finish a single page. How delicious it is to be tired, when little chats with you are possible in spite of my halting Unterwood, and when "A la recherche" is a guarantee of rest.....

5058

3706

Thursday, July
Thursday, July, 14th, 1949.
Memorandum:

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The morning was rosey, and at 8 A. M. sent me four men, after asking me if I was inclined to further my museum innovations. I was.

But before I had set the wheels turning very smoothly, a message came announcing two gentlemen to see me. It was the New Orleans Laughlin with a Mr. Mark, I believe, who seems to have fine town house of his own on Byou St. Jean and is interested in architecture.

Mr. Laughlin tells me he is about to publish a photographic study on the Iron and Stone Work of New Orleans. He says everyone is forever talking about the Iron Work but no one seems to have realized that the Crescent City has some really lovely sculptured things in Marble. He says he has taken about one thousand one hundred pictures, from which he will select about one hundred for his photographic volume. It ought to be interesting.

The two men began photographing the front of the big house and from there passed to the one time kitchen of plantation days which was all they had time for today, as they were due back at home by 5 this afternoon. But those plans were abruptly altered when Mr. Laughlin came to the African House where I was busy having the things moved on the upper floor. He caught one look at the ground floor, and noting the lovely reds of the old bricks in them he called to his companion to drop the Kitchen and to hurry to the car to get all the colored film they had with them. They spent the balance of their morning engaged in recording that interior, enchanted with the setting, several of the old utensils which were unknown to them, etc., etc.

After dinner, Celeste dropped in at the one time kitchen, now the studio, to see howdy and asked if she might see the African House. What with the drizzle, I recommended the morrow, but she waited aside and

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3707

elements, and so I walked over with her. She seemed to like the "new-old look", and to my surprise, she broke into tears. Damp outside, damp inside. She explained that she felt thus moved by the sight of the place and the pleasure which it would have afforded the Madam, had she ever seen it thus. She decided she would have to go straight home and drag Madam Regard, but I put my foot down on that suggestion, what with the rain and the fact that I wanted to get to work. But it was nice to know she liked what she saw.

But while the tricks of the African side are pretty, I saw as colorful a sight as the other day at the hall ever run across, a study of red, white, black and green and blue, a study to yourself of big old trees, myrtle, in the full glory of large blossoms, a watermelon bed amongst its deep green foliage. The blue sky above as deep in a cloudy blue sort of way. The trunk of the tree divided about three feet from the ground, the two projecting limbs also forming a giant, with their soft gray-brown bark. Some gardeners were working just beyond, and tall, lithe, after passing that way, stopped to lean against the large myrtle, putting its arms to carry out the shape of the tree. Its strong, dark arms and its back were bare, but only by the sharp white of a helmet he was wearing. He had a renegade cotton trouser, the only one I saw, and a belt, a belt over his narrow hips and a belt of legs, blue, which his black belt rested softly on the green grass. I caught a glimpse of him as I walked along the garden path. Few feet behind him, and while the picture was still in my mind, it was the most satisfyingly colorful scene I ever witnessed. If Theodore Rousseau could only have painted that picture just once or if George Barbier might only have touched the lovely hills.

This is the first time I have treated myself to a dinner at the house, and it has been good to have a little that with you before beginning my correspondence. Oddly enough, I find myself obsessed by the most perfect combination in my dining room ever treated, hourly going down, and yet, inevitably fall asleep before finishing a single page. The delicious it is to be tired then little chats with you are possible in spite of my halting underwood, and what a technique is a guarantee of rest.....

3078

3708

Friday, July 15th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Substitute The Bindery for The Studio, as of yesterday's Memo, and you will read today's program without having to bother going through this one.

But today I had but four men working with me, and so we probably accomplished more, Fugabour, Mr. Brew, Little King and Beau Mack.

Celeste and Madam Regard went shopping in Alexandria early this morning, but I caught up with them before they headed out, and so was able to ask them to get me so (some) cellophane. I next saw them about first dark, Celeste in a terrific dither about getting a bath and dressed for some frolic in town tonight, but I got the stuff, and so I was in no other at all.

Back at Yucca, I found the Dark Duke sitting on Grandpere Augustin's pew from the old Church, and along side him was one of the Anthony's, Murrell and Peter. They had dined on salty food and were anxious for water. I provided the jug and emptied the ice box of the big house for ice, while they drew the water from the cistern. We sat for half an hour on the front gallery behind the screen of banana plants, and I found it good to sit for a while, relaxing the more because of their easy velvety laughter and the bumpers of ice water.

Before leaving for the show, they helped me out the cellophane into appropriate sizes to cover ten of Clemence's creations.

Tomorrow morning I shall lay out a Clemence Show on the upper floor of the African House, using these items and a couple of larger framed ones. I can't say the lighting of the second floor of the African House is ideal for displaying paintings, but surely there never could be a more perfect atmosphere for a Cane River Primitive exposition, all masterpieces of a person of color.

If Celeste felt moved to tears at her first visit

3708

3709

to the ground floor yesterday, I reckon I had better figure on her passing out when she gets to the second.

Either that, or she will re-act not at all.

I am still running behind in my correspondence, but I shall get around to a flock of people this week-end, if we don't get too many pilgrims, I hope. I shall put off a response to Anne Parish for a few days at least, on the assumption that I shall be able to send you and her a butterfly lily shortly, for the buds are in an most expectant and interesting condition.

By dint of vast fortitude, I read half a page of little Marcel's opus before going to sleep in my chair last night. I'll probably do equally well tonight. It is a crime to read such an elegant book through the impressario of the Scourby magnitude in such brief snatches, but I can't resist trying to make a go at the business, in spite of the fact that I know I shall have much better chances a little later in the month, I hope. I am so glad I had an opportunity to read the French version as read by the man whose name more entirely eludes me, for his presentation is splendid. But no one, of course, compares with A. Scourby, and thus we have the spectacle of a translation of a French novel into English whose translation is so marvelous that it almost equals the original, and possibly does, while the rendition on to records in English easily surpasses the version recorded in the original tongue. How fortunate are the Proust devotees who have access to the voice of the A. F. B.'s prize star.

Before dawn, and while all honest people were still in dreams, I sauntered up to Arensburg to get in a few licks before the ball started rolling at Melrose. Of course everything is lush-lush, and I can't make up my mind if weeds under such humid conditions harm or help young trees. A case in point is a live oak which, because of its situation, I had neglected during the past couple of weeks while the Johnson Grass was climbing skyward. This morning I sought it out, and made a clearing about it, but from the looks of the tender young sprout, it was quite capable of thriving by itself and was apparently flourishing amidst the over-shadowing weeds, for it had put out half a dozen branches and was redolent with sturdy green leaves in the greatest amplitude. It is so pleasant to find this as a good excuse for my own dilly-dallying. And so to Tender Leaf and Marcel, and to sleep....

3710

3710

banker, Foster, which later was to become the home of Frank Sargent, the place to be known as Clifton, and which in the summer of 1904 I assume this is the mansion in which the L'illustration article as located. Sunday, July 17th, 1949.

Memorandum:

How elegant is your letter of Tuesday, and how redolent with news.

What with all the heat, humidity and Venezuelans on top of you at the same time, I marvel that you find time to take typewriter in hand. Heat, humidity and pilgrims sometimes tend to gum up things down this way, but here one finds the recompense of much blue sky and open country, which somehow short circuits the drive which in town the asphalt and steel hems in.

Yours was a splendid combination of words regarding the selection of tickets for your out of town guests. "As I have neither voice nor choice in the matter".... May I congratulate you. And may I add in the same breath that there may be great compensation in the skit selected, for as a result of it, and since some of the audience will not understand a word of the doings, they may thereby get quite enough of Manhattan at one sitting, and thus save the wear and tear on your own constitution by not rushing in on the metropolis again quite so soon.

And may I congratulate you on your literary discoveries. Naturally I fell out when you quoted Brad's character as having the same Johnson Grass problems as we. Obviously that stuff puts us in the same group with the housewife and the farmer, neither of whose work is never done, and from where I sit, it is obvious that if and when everything else is settled, we shall always have Johnson Grass to consider, just in case we should get everything else in the world settled to our complete satisfaction.

And my special delight is in your account of the special issue of L'illustration, devoted to America. It is so good of you to give me the details, and particularly those concerning the Audubon article. I got a great kick out of the writer's interest in J. J.'s landscape of Hatches, which certainly is a most interesting panorama. But what was wonderful about it was his pointing out of Rosalie, assuming he referred to the mansion, for one thing making the picture of unique historical interest is the fact that Audubon painted it slap on the spot where a little later Rosalie was to be erected, and so it is by the record in oils that we are able to determine that Rosalie had not be started in 1823, for the old gallows are still standing on the emplacement of the future mansion, which, as perhaps the author intended to indicate, marks the site of old Fort Rosalie. There is a very clear reproduction of another mansion, standing on the cliffs, the home of the

ONE

3711

banker, Postelthwaite, which later was to become the home of Frank Surget, the place to be known as Clifton, and blown up by the Yankees in 1864. I assume this is the mansion in correctly designated in the L'Illustration article as Rosalie. When next we find ourselves in Mrs. Kelly's dining room at Melrose, we must draw out our reading glass with which we shall have fortified ourselves in advance, in order that we may get a first rate look at this famous old mansion.

But the best thing about your letter was your reference to a vacation, and while I am entranced at the prospect you may be able to grab off a couple of days at Greenwood Lake which I hope you will be able to do nothing, which is exceedingly difficult to picture, I am equally enchanted to learn that your plans for the balance of your "time out" is left open. I realize a billion circumstances make it impossible for you to contemplate the remainder of the time may be spent, but I do feel I should place this knowledge in your possession, so it, too, may be taken into account with other contemplations. On receipt of your recent letter, Celeste express the hope again that she hoped you might get down this way before too long. I need not voice my own sentiments on this point. You might be a guest in her house or you might occupy the big house more or less by yourself, although Pat might share it with you, and possibly Dan might be home one night, or there might be people like Essie Mae, or some such, or nobody. In any event, I just want to say that in the event a Louisiana faunt might possibly be fitted into your plans, you will know that in spite of the weeds and Johnson Grass that may becloud the horizon and the immediate local foreground, the welcome mat will be neatly spread, and whenever you decide the magical moment has arrived, your advent will be heralded with joy, but always on the assumption, of course, that you may not mind the various manifestations of rural, not to mention rustic aspects of life, as characterize our somewhat unimaginable existence. In fine, all I want to say is what you already know, that whenever circumstances suit you and you are not lacking in courage to explore this subtropical region, we shall be on tip-toes in anticipation.

Mrs. Rand passed by Saturday afternoon. She said she had stopped at the store to buy something and J. H. told her she simply could not go on to the camp until she had inspected the African House. Apparently he approves of its "new, old look".

Dr. Rand passed by later with his son, Horace, for a quick glance at the thing, and Horace put this machine in order and took the ancient Underwood away with him to be put in order, too. Perhaps this will assist me in avoiding the mess I made in last week's scrawls.

So many other things to touch upon and yet I must close for the moment. Again my thanks for your elegant letter, and I know how happy you are, as am I for you, to have the girl friend home again.....

ONE

3712

Monday, July 18th, 1949.

Memorandum

And so I take Royal in hand a little later than usual. In fact my clock points to ten thirty, marking the first minute since five o'clock this morning that I have been alone and able to have a little chat with you.

The Loom House was on the docket for today's primary interest, and it wasn't so difficult, for it isn't a large building, and except for weeding things out and jamming stuff in, the whole thing was rather simple. But I am still contending with the bindery which seems to be my problem child, mostly because it is inclined to be rather dark, and the impedimenta such as presses, paper cutters and what not, all seem to be back while the walls of the building itself, the interior, are gray gray, being hewn logs that perhaps a hundred years ago were white washed of which nothing save the gray tint suggests that the timbers had ever been treated or touched up. Perhaps I shall paint the ceiling white, and that may sufficiently spread light rays about the gloom to inspire me to make something out of the place.

A couple of interruptions during the day slowed things down a bit, too. Among other callers was Dr. Postell who ran down from Bermuda where he has established himself for the next six weeks. I invited him to return on Wednesday afternoon on the assumption that Dr. Rand might be at Melrose, as much with the hope to send the man away happy did I hold out this enticement as this seemed to be one of the few ways open to me at the moment to rid myself with a measure of grace from a caller who was gumming up my force of men who are all at sea as what next to do if left alone.

Dr. Postelle has recently been in Natchez. He didn't remark about changes in atmosphere but what he did say was enough, if not too much. He reports the window and door sashes have been removed from the old Marschalk Printing office and says that the ancient building will probably have been torn down or fallen down within a few weeks. Thus will disappear an historic landmark, where the first printer of the Great Southwest wrought his mighty pen and press. Isn't that a pity.

And I reckon you have too often heard me speak of that remarkable slave hospital on lower St. Catherine's Street, the only public hospital for slaves in ante bellum times. Well, that landmark no longer exists. The whole thing has been torn down and replaced by a slap-dab new filling station or some such. Oh Trade! Oh, Progress what crimes are pulled off in thy names.

Dr. Postelle reported seeing Mrs. Moore and found her somewhat erratic, jumping quite unexpectedly from subject to subject without

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much evidence of transitional thoughts, a manifestation which is not entirely new perhaps, but, as he has known her for some years, may be supposed to have increased with the years.

But aside from these somewhat depressing picture of things in the Bluff City, there was a brighter gleam in the Cane River country, for in hastening through some trash a hour or so after my guest had left, I ran across an account book which will probably prove to be most interesting and quite valuable, if and when circumstances permit a casual examination. I paused long enough to have a couple of the names appearing in the book read to me. They were familiar, Herzog, Lecompte, Bossier and so on. I did not learn the owner of the Journal or what sort of merchandise it covers, for it is in French, and my reader was unacquainted with the language and I had not time to have him laboriously spell out the words sufficiently difficult were they in English, since the handwriting is a bit on the old fashioned side. And the grandest part of the whole business is that the entries cover the years from September, 1881 through the Civil War years and down through Reconstruction and into the early 1880's. It's going to be fun exploring this item page by page and account by account eventually, don't you think so. Surely the economic picture that is probably presented by the variations in market fluctuations over this vital period ought to be ever so illuminating, don't you think, and I assume that the prices are probably in Federal currency in 1861, and undoubtedly move into Confederate coinage a little later, and then back to Union dollars again. I have set this volume aside for personal perusal before eventually turning it over to others intent on finding such original material.

I believe there may be one or two other account books of this nature, possibly a little earlier, possibly a little later. I merely glanced at the shelf where they seemed to be resting under a cover of dust that suggested venerability. Perhaps before the week is out, I shall find time to glance into them, and if I do, I shall speak further of them, and if not, we can eventually take them up at a later sitting, don't you think so.

The draper, I wonder if that is what they called the upholsterer in ante bellum times, telephoned this morning from town, to say he was ready to undertake making the slip covers for my sofa which the plantation is giving my old rattletrap. He is also doing a chair for the big house. Pleasantly enough, he is a mulatto named Metoyer who, like the rest of Grandpere's descendants, once lived on Ile Brevelle, but has long since lived in town.

At 5 this morning, I found J. H. awaiting the appearance of his workmen, seated on the store gallery, and we chatted about a dozen things, including the progress the carpenters are making on the addition being tacked on to his house, when they might be finished so the painters might start slapping white paint on the interior of Yucca, etc., etc. I'm afraid this letter has already claimed too much of your time, but in spite of my dullness, it was grand to have your ear at the close of day....

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Tuesday, July 19th, 1949.

Memorandum

I saw J. H. again this morning on the store gallery between 5 and 6. Mr. Earnest, the overseer, is a rather ordinary man and consumed with curiosity. He was just leaving when he heard me say to J. H.

"It happened yesterday afternoon, about 3:30, but that, of course was merely the beginning."

What the overseer hadn't heard was J. H.'s question, a sking me when the first butterfly lily should make up its mind for the current season.

In reality, I think J. H. didn't realize his next question was so maddening to one dying to find out what we were talking about, for then the merchant planter inquired as to just where it had happened, and by the time I had confided that the whole thing had transpired on my front gallery, poor Mr. Earnest could scarcely mount his horse which was pawing to get going.

Later in the morning, Mr. Earnest came to see me on some pretext or other, and so flimsy, it was that I purposely avoided any reference to his observation that he had been present when I was talking with J. H. at the beginning of the new day. And the, as so often happens under such circumstances, after he had broken down and confessed what he was curious to know what it was that had happened yesterday afternoon, and I had told him quite frankly, he found it absolutely impossible to believe a word I said, having created such a variety of vast events in his own mind that the mere unfolding of a flower was just too much for him. Mr. Earnest and I have always been exceedingly courteous to each other and he dare be nothing short of that, I imagine, and yet it looks of disbelief could slaughter the most certainly slain when it became obvious that I wouldn't go into further details with him.

But regardless of all this non sense, the butterfly lilies, as you see, have made their bow, and from now until a hard frost they will make life the more wonderful by the lovely pattern and fragrance.

At Arenbourg, having been newly planted, they will not bloom until a little later, but they are looking wonderfully well, thanks to all the moisture they had had this season, and next year they will probably be easy rivals with their Melrose kinsmen in making their entrance early.

Today's program was much like yesterday's, except that one substitutes the Wash House, a charming little mulatto structure in the Chinese fashion of modest pagoda, for the word Leen House.

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Mrs. Rand came by in the afternoon, bringing a Mrs. Walloce with her. The two ladies are spending the night at the camp and invited me over for a ten thirty supper which I declined with thanks since these days seldom seem me finished with things I want to do in the correspondence section, and I can pass by the Rands on week ends when I am not busy.

As for my stalwart assistants, they will all be on a frolic tomorrow, I expect, and I shall be glad to do a few things alone. June Hachette a negro of 67 from Little River, will be buried at 11 in St. Mary's on the Bayou and all o'clock is a magical hour for a funeral since it is too early to permit any one to work before the event and too late to enable anyone to do more than ride up and down the road afterward. I know not how many children and grandchildren June has but if they alone attend the cortege should be impressive. One of his daughters is named 19 because she happened to be just that one, but there were others after her, and I believe they are all flourishing and are many times parents and grandparents.

Mrs. Vernon Cloutier entertained informally for some of the gentry, some kind of a coffee thing at Beaufort in honor of somebody blue for other, but I of course declined in favor of sticking with my dusky helpers thereby spoiling a nice quiet, restful morning for them but I guess none of them fell out because of my tactics, and everyone one of them right now is probably at the honkey tonk, fresh as daisies and as untroubled of fatigue as a new born oyster.

Pat's friend, George Mouton, headed out this afternoon, Denver bound. He seems to be quite a smart boy, thinks Melrose is one place where he could be happy hasn't the vaguest notion of ever doing a lick of gainful labor so long as papa is a millionaire, and proposes to formulate plans for the winter only after he has passed the summer in the Rockies. He is so casual at 21 or thereabouts, and withal so sensible in so many ways that one can but wonder as to what the future holds for him, and if it be luck or otherwise, it would seem that he will take it calmly and with a fair amount of indifference.

Among the servants is evolving an economic pattern, thanks to the present policy of the Public Welfare branch of the Government, which possibly may eventuate in a minimum Federal funds payment to everyone, I suppose, with the resulting lower wage scales paid by employers who, because of their high Federal and State income taxes may end up by basing their scale of wage payments on the amount the individual employee receives in Federal checks. To illustrate is the case of the cook, Mattie, who has two illegitimate children. Because they have no father, their actual fathers being men of large families and with not sufficient funds to maintain their own, the Welfare now gives Mattie a monthly sum equal to her salary as cook. This fact, I should imagine, would not induce the plantation to increase her monthly wage, which although it has nothing to do with the case, is thrice the amount allotted to the "Surintendent des Batiments". And her wages then doubled again by the Welfare check makes a topsyturvy of things which cannot be reasoned out, save on the basis of satisfaction in making a contribution to the preservation of a way of life that seems important.....

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Wednesday, July 20th, 1949.

Memorandum

Last night I weakened. I finished my mail about 11 and sat down for a cigarette and a page of Proust before folding up, when the distant bark of Celeste's dachshund recalled Mrs. Rand's Hans and I thought a gesture on the social side was perhaps in order, and since this is one of the rare times she is staying over night with but a single guest, I combed into my boots, for the dew was heavy, and headed off across the cotton fields.

Luck was on my side. As a matter of fact, I had just headed into the cotton when a headlight on the public road coming from the direction of the bridge, suggested Celeste and Madam Regard might have been at the camp. And so it proved to have been the case, for when I arrived five minutes later, Mrs. Rand was fixing a post supper snack, the other ladies having just left.

The camp was delicious, so cool and pleasant, while the lighting was marvelously subdued, with only an outside bulb at both ends of the camp allowed the light to filter through the leaves growing hard by the building. It was restful and quiet, and Mrs. Rand's guest and I sat on the gallery up over the water while the post supper supper was being stirred up at the other end of the building.

Being a little tired tonight, the lady's name eludes me momentarily but I believe I mentioned it in yesterday's note. I enjoyed chatting with her so much and found her especially interesting when speaking of her brother, Dr. Hubble, who was written up in Time last October, I believe. He is with the Palomar Observatory, and sn't that the place where the great Corning Glass eye has found its eventual permanent station. The lady told me that three considerations were paramount in selecting an ideal situation for the great telescope first, a rural site miles from electric lights of any city, second, altitude not so much for clearness of the California air but because, and I didn't know this before, earthquake shocks are very slight on high elevations such as a mountain top on which an observatory would be located, and third, in spite of the required elevation, there was bound to be facilities for a landing field nearby, since many of the scientists working with the telescope or on moment to moment data obtained from the great lense, would find it necessary to spend but a portion of their time at the Observatory, so that easy and rapid communication with the outside world would be imperative.

I have no doubt you may have know all about these requirements or noted them in articles on the subject, but as the latter two were new to me, I thought I would run the risk of handing out second hand stuff by mentioning them.

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After toasted sandwiches and things, balancing nicely with the cool of the night and the tall drinks, some kind of punch, with an applejack base, as near as I could guess, I declined the proffered suggestion that I permit myself to be driven home, and so headed back across the cotton fields under a star spangled sky that somehow seemed perfectly laid out for the conversation just concluded.

I saw the ladies again this morning at Celeste's at 9 o'clock coffee. They appeared as fresh as daisies, and as I had hit my pillow by a little after midnight, I had experienced no difficulty in knocking at the gates of Arenbourg before the sun.

The old Metoyer punka which has long graced my gallery giving on the white garden needed refurbishing, and stumbling over a firm piece of Lowells the other day in my business of setting things to rights, I took the frame down and decided I would attempt doing the thing over by myself. At Mrs. Rand, questioned on one point, persuaded me without much difficulty to let her take to the camp with her where she wanted to tack the stuff on for me. I reckon she will return it before long, after which I shall slap white paint all over the frame and the Lowells, too, and when the whole business is properly dried and board like in stiffness, I shall give the thing a couple of extra coats, more white, possibly, a perhaps an orange red or a shell pink followed later by a couple of dabs of umber, to return it to its original ante bellum flavor, as view by 20th century eyes, and so that little job will be accomplished without much effort on my part, and with a maximum of effect, undoubtedly, thanks to Mrs. Rand's artistry.

You will enjoy the enclosure, and especially the part about the Dormons. That is so typical of Caroline I shall observe to Robina that since Caroline passes as an expert on plants, she ought to know well enough that Mrs. Edgar B. Stearns do not grow on every bush.

I like the story of the Dormon reaction to the loss of their anti jewelry. I also like another story which I may have regaled you with before. I shall risk repetition.

The Sisters Dormon were on easy street, both of them having jobs. And so one Friday evening when each had returned to Briarwood from their respective lines of endeavor, Caroline said to Virginia

"Surprise, Sister. Today I quit my job. After all, there is no reason on earth why both of us should work and you are making enough to run us both alright."

And in response, ole Virginia countered

"Surprise, yourself. I but definitely quit my job today on the same theory. And you know perfectly well that neither of can get our jobs back". And they were both enchanted, albeit a little stu

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Thursday, July 21st, 1949.

Memorandum
Off hand, I should say I am going to fold up my beard at a reasonable hour tonight. But one really never knows. After Tuesday night's frolic across the cotton fields, I was really tired last night when my last piece of mail had been finished and I found myself on the point of stepping into my bath, to what I had thought would be but a preliminary splash prior to a few paragraphs with mein lieber Swann, a cigarette and a glass of iced tea, when lo! just as my toe touched the water, some one knocked at my door. And what a knock!

It was James Cunningham, quite unannounced, and since confession is good for the soul, I might as well admit that my cordiality did not drip from honeyed words on my part. But naturally I bedded and breakfasted and even dined him, but all with a certain restraint that in spite of the heat, may suggest a frost on his part for months to come.

On quitting me at noon, he offered me a bottle of Bourbon, which was a very kind gesture but I should prefer my outhouse port and solitude to his Bourbon and midnight surprise visits. Willfully I added a touch or two of discomfort in hopes that his memory of this visit might not remain too much of an aura of delight. After he had been here half an hour, he said he must get on to his hotel in town as he was quite tired but that he would pass this way to see me in the morning at any hour I appointed. Casually I responded that I realized of course that he would sleep in my bed, and went on talking and asking questions and talking and talking, quite exhausted myself, hoping against hope that I might succeed in making him memorably so.

He was in Natchez on business on Monday and Tuesday and spent some time with his friend, Earle Miller, formerly of Dallas, who a year or so ago purchased an old house on the South East corner of the last intersection in South Wall Street in Natchez, which Mr. Miller has been restoring for several months. The Marschalk house as I feared, is nothing now but a memory, the historic old building has been demolished and the bricks sold to Mr. Miller who is paving a patio over some such with them. Humiliating, isn't it?

Well, so things turn, and although I eventually went to bed, I was so busy thinking of the vanishing landmarks that it was after 2 before I fell asleep, having thus received immediate payment for my meanness to another.

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Did I mention that Peter and Spirit, a veteran of his own age, were in a scuffle at the honkey tonk on Saturday night and that Peter shot three times at Spirit, but knowing how Spirits are, you will not be surprised to learn that any of the shots were effective.

This afternoon Alphonse had the two boys arrested for disturbing the peace, which, from a time angle, seems rather leisurely. I enjoyed the discussion at table tonight regarding the matter. Pat who likes Peter, would have prevented the arrest, he said, had he been called in on the case. Dan said he intended telephoning whoever issues warrants and telling them not to issue them, had not J. H. stepped in and told him to let the affair run its course.

And I must say the merchant planter is clever, for being arrested will worry neither Peter nor Spirit. Cousin Arthur Watson will get a job defending them in court and so will make a few extra dollars although he is already rich, but never rich enough, of course. And J. H. who doesn't need all his plantation hands at the moment when the cotton is laid by, that is no longer cultivated, and the period for the opening of the bolls and ginning is still a month off. He will see to it, of course, that the boys will be discharged by the Judge and yet by letting the cards play out, he will have let Alphonse harvest the bill will of several of his best customers for having had two of his best customers arrested, and at the same time J. H. will forever be able to remark, but ever so casually to Alphonse when the latter's place will have been closed shortly, that he, Alphonse, deprived the merchant planter of two of his best men, who they aren't, in the midst of the season without so much as consulting him on the point, and that by bringing the honkey tonk to the attention of the Court as a noisy place and therefore a nuisance, he was preparing himself for all kinds of clashes with the law and the enforcement officials. I might add, and here is probably an important fact that J. H. already owns three undivided eighths of the Alphonse tract, and if the honkey tonk eventually folds up, there is every probability that about five additional eighths will fall like a ripe plum in J. H.'s lap. Did someone say it is the Chinese who are clever.

Today I put Dr. Miller's log cabin in order, with just the right number of people to help me. Dr. Knipmeyer came, of course, and the Cunningham number was here until after noon, and Mrs. Rand, Mrs. Combs and 8 other South Louisiana people passed this way, so things didn't drag much. Mrs. Rand and Mrs. Wallace are entertaining tonight, I believe, and I declined. And speaking of Mrs. Rand reminds me of the lady doctor, and did I tell you that she dropped in at Beaufort the other day with her fine dog, Hans, which killed Madam Cloutier's fine blooded cat? Yes, I think I did tell you, but I don't mind repeating the tale, since we all, I suppose, like to tell yourself how right we are, even when doing things of dubious social value as did I in giving away the dog. Here is the first letter from the Austin, Texas people since they were here in the Spring. New Orleans would be nice with them, but I prefer Melrose by myself....

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Friday, July 22nd, 1949.

Memorandum

And so, from the enclosure, you will note that Miss Myra still likes to receive letters in exchange for post cards, and that Mary Rhodes, poor soul, is still as much Mary Rhodes as ever, and withal, quite capable of turning a neat phrase, and I refer to the phrase concluding "golden in cost and color" or some such.

My program, being the same as the foregoing days of the current week, needs scant reference. And the pilgrims con; time to assault the place in spite of the heat and even the elegant little shower we had during the afternoon.

What a year for the Arenbourg children. I saw Mrs. Rand and Mrs. Wallace at the store when I went for the mail between gardening and pilgrimage activities. Playfully she said she was of an unforgiving nature and as I had jilted her by not dropping in on her and her guests last night, she was but utterly finished with me, unless, perchance, I would prove to her that I wasn't entirely faithless, confirming the same by coming to luncheon around noon at any hour I might name.

And so I went over at 11:30 for an elegant collation. She had two tables on the space above the water. She, her brother, some other kinsman and Mrs. Wallace at one and I with six copies at the other. Recalling the Madam's line, I grinned at myself for having such a good time, for in reality I did do much of the talking at my table. And the food, as always at the Rands, was both bountiful and marvelous.

Mrs. Rand's brother drove me back home, for it was drizzling a little by then and while I was in ordinary plantation clothes, which I didn't mind getting soaked, I did give a thought to the newly covered punka which I had tucked under my arm, and I do want to get it well coated with paint before it gets damp.

In pausing to glance at my clocks, which registered ten thirty, I detect a mighty curious, albeit generous margin on at least one edge of this page. I reckon I must be a little sleepy or possibly just careless.

Be that as it may, I am as happy as a clam to have this little chat with you, and if I am tired, it is merely because I have had fun doing one thing or another since sun up.

In the most out of the way places and in utter discard, I have run across a couple of additional items of interest for the African House, and one thing eventually for Arenbourg.

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July 24, 1949

One thing for the African House is a rather remarkable tombstone, which isn't stone at all, of course, regardless of the implication in the name. Rather it is of iron, two iron bars possibly an inch square and possibly three feet or four in length, fashioned in the form of a cross. Where the two bars meet spreads an iron plaque, each of the four corners riveted to the four arms of the cross. I shall copy the epitaph in a subsequent Memo. Roughly it reads:

"Ce git
Marie Louise Dupre,
epouse de Jacques Lacasse,
Née l'an 1764,
Decedee le 1 Mars, 1816."

I assume one arm of the cross may have been placed in the ground. The other three extremities have little plaques on them or are flattened out a little. The one at the left bears the name of Jesus, the middle or top one that of "Maria", and the third, to the right carries the word Joseph. The upright bar seems considerably bent, leading me to believe it may, after years as a marker, fallen to the ground, and the spot it marked forgotten, so that finally a plough, or perhaps a dozen ploughs for a long time until now may have passed over it and wrenched it about. I must jangle my grapevine a bit and see if I can learn anything about La Dupre or Le Lacasse, both ancient names in this region.

On our side I found a perfectly elegant piece of porcelaine, and in perfect condition. Perhaps you can guess its original purpose by a word of description. It is pure white, perhaps a trifle over two feet in length, say a foot and a half wide and perhaps a foot in height. It has simple but very elegant handles of the same material on the extreme ends. Somehow it suggests something between a glorified soup tureen and some elegant lady's most refined bath tub, but since the piece is oblong and rather square at its gently rounded corners, it doesn't seem exactly made for soup, and yet "my lady" must have been diminutive and mighty light in weight if she could have used such material for a bath. But regardless of its original purpose, it makes a magnificent item for holding gobs of magnolia branches or such like, and eventually it may grace an extended board at Arenbourg, don't you think so? In any event, I have set it aside with that dream in mind there were a couple of other things for the Museum, too, that I wanted to talk about, but I shall save me for a going over at another sitting.

I got off some mail tonight, and wrote an article on Melrose and some contemporary aspects of the place for Mrs. Lake, including the same in the body of the letter so she may, if she cares to, lift it bodily and slap it into some Fort Worth paper, if she feels so inclined.

I don't like writing a letter of this kind on Friday nights but perhaps I shall do better a week hence, I hope. By then I shall be redoing fewer museums and scuffling about more in the open air, and that ought to be stimulating for both reader and writer.....

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Sunday, July 24th, 1949.

Memorandum

How nice to have the postman hand me your letter of Tuesday on Saturday morning.

I am glad you had as compensation for Madison Square Garden the presence of Richard who must have helped mightily to make things more pleasurable.

I take it you continue to get your share of weather, and especially large slices of humidity. In these parts, the "dews and damps" continue. Both yesterday and today we had enormous showers, fattening the boll weevil crop and reducing the formation of cotton bolls. While we remained parched all summer last year, the country between Alexandria and New Roads was being washed out. This year the situation is reversed, and while we have a superabundance, a belt several miles wide to the South is crying for a drizzle. From various stations about the country, I gather the entire Middle West is having a damp time, while yesterday some place in Texas got 7.38 inches at a single sitting which seems to be the height of something or other.

I wonder if you were as thunderstruck as I in hearing the radio report of Francis Cardinal Spellman, accusing Mrs. Roosevelt of prejudice, intolerance or whatever. Being so accustomed to hear the lady criticised for just the opposite, for being too liberal, too tolerant, and so on, the Cardinal's statement floored me.

Of course everyone knows that the head of St. Patrick's is the head of the richest diocese in America, and as head of this religious institution, he gives the nod to Plummer and Co., the Wall Street brokerage firm devoted to handling stocks and bonds of the Catholic Church. For years I have been given to understand that the St. Patrick's clique, concentrating on Wall Street operations, viewed with alarm everything the Roosevelt Administration did when giving attention to supervision of job trading in stocks and bonds. I am therefore wondering if pocketbook resentment against F. D. R. hasn't spilled over into a broadside against the widow.

I can only marvel at how wonderfully stupid smart men in one field or another can be when once they get off the track.

If the Cardinal had only selected any one of a half dozen other points at which to point his guilty finger, there might have been some hope that many people might have been taken in, regardless of the utter lack of foundation. But in selecting in,

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tolerance to shoot at, he has stuck out his own neck and invited Catholic, Protestant and Jew to klop it. And as a result of the Cardinal's attack, Mrs. Roosevelt's popularity, steadily mounting during the past four years, will surge upward at increased velocity, I believe.

There is just one question I should like to ask the Cardinal^N Admitting, as he must, that in the past, Mrs. Roosevelt has expended her energies in behalf of all religious groups, and as she devoted herself, for example, to securing funds for a bell for the Catholic mission in East Africa, just how much effort has the Cardinal ever made to secure a bell for an Episcopal Church, the institution to which Mrs. R. belongs.

On Saturday morning things looked bad for a while. Rumor had it that the Wenks would be coming to Natchitoches for a new car, and that of course brought with it the prospect of having them on our necks over the week end. But it was finally arranged that Pat would drive the thing to Shreveport instead, whereupon everyone breathed a sigh of relief and blue skies replaced the clouds. I don't know what kind of a vehicle it is, but it seems to be imposingly large with billions of buttons and gadgets, windows that fly up or down at the wave of a hand and all that sort of thing. On the telephone Sister explained that she wasn't so anxious to have immediate delivery but the children simply insisted upon it, reminding one of the time when Lloyd at the age of 4 simply insisted, I albeith through his mother, that his Grandmother give him a five hundred dollar bond. What a business.

The former clerk, Billy Hinton, his wife and two children, spent the day here, mostly at Celeste's. . . . Because of the rains, there was a scant pilgrimage problem. I was lucky for my callers included the Dark Duke, Ezra, Dr. Rand, my secretary and the like, everyone to my liking and brimming over with conversation that interested me

I am sorry I didn't have an opportunity to jot down a couple of phrases the Dark Duke employed before other callers passed this way and prevent immediate recording. He was speaking of a section along Red River which, from the custom of the people to complain, impelled him to call the "too, too land", since the people living there are forever saying it's too hot or too cold, or too wet or too dry, leading the Dark Duke to opine that so long as one of those people continued to breathe, there would be too many of them. I shall try to get him to return to the subject of "them too, too folks" again, for his phraseology is both arresting and hilarious.

On Saturday night, I and at long last, I got around to reading a few pages of Swann. It is marvelous. And so the life of poor old Xenophon is going to be made miserable from this point forth until the Budding Grove, Germantown and Cities of the Plain have been properly canned. So many things eventually to be enjoyed on the gallery of Arenbourg when day is done. . . .

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Monday, July 25th, 1949.

Memorandum

The middle of July and I have my fires going. At the same time a big old electric fan is stirring up a breeze. It has drizzled again most of the day and the attendant dampness is such that artificial heat is almost imperative to prevent things from getting mouldy. From day to day the prospects of a cotton crop dwindle while the Arenbroug children continue to thencewill enjoy Miss Nellie's letter, for while it starts out a little gloomily, it improves as it progresses, and it seems to me I detect a gleam of hope that she may return to Natchez when summer is done, I hope.

The Carpenters she speaks of are the Dunleith people. I understand Mrs. Carpenter is asking for one million dollars in settlement, and it is generally believed that is a modest request, since the Carpenters are considered multi millionaires. *divorce*

I don't know the lady well, although I have spent some time with her on occasion and I used to compare notes with her at Dr. Butler's salons on Tuesday afternoons some years back. The fact that she made up or rather was present at those gatherings suggests her mental status, for the Butler Tuesdays were like Louis XIV's Marly week ends, the whole world petitioned, "Marly, Sire", as though pleading for admittance into Heaven, but a mighty few ever received the royal nod.

From the two sizes of paper Miss Nellie used and the way she speaks of Virginia Moore leads me to believe that she may have intended saying something further regarding the circumstances leading up to her present condition.

I am so glad Miss Maude is being so well taken care of at the hospital. What a pity she had to wait for 80 years to be relieved of the poverty that was hers all her life.

The Mr. Alexander mentioned is the former President of the bank and it was he who employed Mrs. Jim Ward, a drunken huzzey, as his secretary. Jim Ward is one third owner of Longwood, although the Wards live at Landsdowne.

I am always being impressed both by the laggardly way and the speedy way in which information is transmitted, and today was a case in point when the college telephoned me to say news had just reached there that a comprehensive museum of weaving things had been brought into being for the delectation of private visitors at Melrose. The purpose of the call was to inquire

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if an exception might be made in the case of the instructors of the Arts and Crafts Department, along with a limited number of the graduate students. A few pilgrims have seen the African House since it was refurbished but I can recall having shown no one the Weaving House, not even Celeste, and so I cannot but wonder how the particulars reached the college with such clarity and whom the informant might be.

But it is good to know that such institutions are interested and that the new arrangements may serve the students in furthering their realization that the theories of hand crafts as dispensed in books may be viewed as a reality, and so near to hand.

A number of years ago, a Hollywood producer, sent his agents to Alexandria, La., with instructions to spread out over the States of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, in search of an authentic old log cabin. Up and down the States the searchers traveled, always being assured that what they sought was to be found just over the line in the next county. Eventually they returned to their home base, having had no success whatsoever, when by some casual remark dropped by someone at a party, it was established that the real thing which they had been seeking for hundreds of miles over the Gulf Area, could really be found only 40 odd miles from Alexandria, at Melrose.

In like matter it evolves that for some time one of the college professors, unacquainted with Melrose, has been casting about Louisiana, hoping to find something in looms other than the three or four in Natchitoches which are of contemporary manufacture. And now, on discovering there are several different types within 15 miles of the college campus, he is naturally entranced.

Among today's visitors was none other than Clemence, who sought my aid in making it possible for her to have her teeth extracted and a new "wreck" contrived for her. I always did love the negroes reference to a plate as a wreck. Poor Mrs. Combs, it is she would will be called upon to assist in the matter, for I believe through the Welfare Office, a certificate can be obtained, following a recommendation by a physician, to have the business taken care of without expense. I shall contact Mrs. Combs on the morrow, and on Thursday perhaps I can angle a certificate out of Dr. Knipmeyer, and so the things spin. You will get a kick out of the enclosure, or rather the clipping accompanying the same. For years, and particularly since our hot July night at two thirty a.m., on the front gallery of the big house, when Frances Benjamin Johnston demanded to know my position in the household before taking a single step toward being shown her apartment, I, too, have pondered upon that matter as to my precise status. But patience pays, as demonstrated herewith, since at long last we find the solution in print....

*Distinguished resident - guest
Clipping with Josephine Hornette*

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Tuesday, July 26th, 1949.

Memorandum

Today was one of those busy days, and yesterday must have been, too, since I forgot to enclose Miss Nellie's letter which I shall try to remember to tuck in with this one. And, having written the above paragraph, Don Worsley tapped on my door, for a somewhat prolonged sitting. And after he had gone, Murrell came. And then my old friend, Boonie, whom I had almost forgotten, and now it is later by a couple of hours, and I am "holding the thought" that no one else passes this way to interrupt our little conversation.

Just for fun this morning I decided I would keep count of how many people I had personal contacts with during the day. Up to this hour of 10:30, I figure the figure to be about 247, although it must be admitted that today's group of colored pilgrims, one group from Gramercy down near New Orleans and another from the Natchitoches colored Trade School, jacked up the figure way above average.

I always like the Gramercy and Trade School groups, and this year everything went along so pleasantly and I made it a point to speak with each one individually. On saying goodbye to them at the front gate, I was touched when a nice fat Aunt Jemima schoolteacher made a little speech and presented me with ten dollars in appreciation for the privilege they had had in touring an old plantation. I responded briefly, and in concluded in asking them if they would do me a favor. They all shouted loud and long in the affirmative, and so I handed the ten dollars back, asking that it be used in securing a year's subscription to some magazine or other they felt all the members of their school would most enjoy.

I had supposed that would terminate the festivities, but the spokesman asked to speak once more, and said the school would like to send me some present, and what would I like. I said I liked people better than anything else in this world and that if they really wanted to do something nice for me they could send me some more people just like themselves, or better still, come back themselves sometime. And at that several of them began to cry, and it was moving, and so to avoid breaking down, too, I laughed, and others of them caught it up, and we all parted without any need for Rosenwald funds for better racial relations.

In today's Times Picayune, according to J. H. I there was an account of the death of Cousin Josephine's husband, Mr. Theodore Grunewald. I must write Cousin Josephine tonight.

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I saw Celeste a few minutes after supper tonight. Madam Regard told me at 9 this morning that Celeste had been in a high nervous condition this morning and had refused to let J. H. drive her to town where she took ether to have a slight operation on a finger. He laughed at her refusal and sent Pat with her instead. J. H. was his usual gay self at dinner this noon. He did not appear at supper, "gone to Alexandria on business", the clerk explained. Hoo-hum...

J. H. sent me three or four men this morning, and since Will Rogers was not among them, I put Fugabou and Beum Mack to setting up a pair of doors in the form of stationary blinds, giving on the end rooms of the gallery facing the White Garden. Other matters called me away before they had completed the job and when I return to see what progress they were making they had finished the job, and, brother, I mean finished. I had them rip the whole thing out, it was so "niggery" and start again, but the second try was even worse than the first, and now I am so fascinated by the thing as a perfect example of what "niggery" carpentry looks like that I am inclined to think I shall slap some white paint on the frame work wherein their artistry excels particularly, and let the whole thing stand as a fearful and wonderful example of their handiwork.

And somewhat after the same fashion I succeeded in getting a big old plantation bell hung under the roof of the African House. A little platform had to be built, and that is really a curiosity. The bell weighing perhaps 75 or 100 pounds rests on the platform precariously, but just so long as it falls on no one, and kills the unsuspecting pilgrim, I shall be satisfied.

I love the old bell, which I have contrived so it can be made to peal out gaily as in former days. Once, after serving on Melrose as the official plantation bell, it was borrow by Uncle Israel to call in his faithful at his Primer Rock Church across Cane River. I think I have touched upon Primer Rock Church before, the Primer being obviously a corruption of Plymouth (h). His bell and his Bible were the two things Uncle Israel loved most. He always declared that as a slave he had never been taught to read, but one night on reaching maturity, he prayed God that he might be able to read His Holy Word. And that night the pious man had a vision and thought he could read from the Good Book, and on awakening, he opened his Bible, and Lo! he never stopped that night nor the next. But he never would look at any other print than appeared in the Good Book, and later after much study, he became the pastor of Primer Rock.

So much to chat about tonight, and yet no opportunity to talk further. But tomorrow is another day and tomorrow night we shall chat again. Almost forgot to say we had another tremendous shower at sundown so Arenbourg must be happy tonight....

3728

Wednesday, July 27th, 1949.

Memorandum

"Ghost of a butterfly" Says Anne Parish and we shall both like the lilies a little more probably, thanks to her happy thought.

As for the other correspondence, Dora's reception of the fermented figs was no surprise, since I had anticipated that in advance, cotton or no cotton. And I must drop Robina a line, telling her that the lady doctor says we have nothing to worry about so far as Caroline Dormon's health goes.

At supper tonight, J. H. told me that Gramercy and the Trade School sent a delegation down here the other day to inquire, following a written request, if they might be permitted to visit Melrose. He apologised for not remembering to speak with me about it. I told him I needed little preparation and besides the pilgrims had the advantage of seeing the place without artificial preparations being rigged up to take off the bloom of "ye olde plantation" atmosphere.

The home front was quieter today. Clemence came by to see me. I had given her a gaudy varnished wooden frame with some gilt filigree festooned in a small design centering the 2 or 3 inch expanse of the wood. It was one of those devastating 1900 things that used to clutter up every lesser bourgeois home, and usually setting off some horrible huge likeness of some departed patriarch whose photograph from the 1870 period had been used as a vague inspiration to blow up the old gentleman into something repulsive. On arriving, Clemence announced she had my picture for me, all painted, and taking off the paper wrapping, she drew forth a much smaller frame of battered gilt, and withal quite charming. I asked her about the one I had given her. She explained that she knew I would like this better, and so had substituted it for mine. She is a minx. But while I didn't glow with too much enthusiasm outwardly, I was secretly enchanted at the new one which somehow suited perfectly the sketch she had painted of an old woman carrying a bucket, glancing over her shoulder in the direction of some goats, so Clemence said they were, but I haven't discovered them as yet. And in spite of the old woman's obvious 80 years and the big bucket she is toting, she is gaily carrying a parasol, but ever so Chinese, at the same time, and a little girl accompanying her is likewise fortified with a sunshade. Clemence explained that the lady was looking around to call the goats for she was fixing to feed them. I took her word for it, but I still don't see the goats, which may possibly turn out to be the real likeness of the animal as the lily is to the butterfly. But be that as it may, the new number will be elegant for my current

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show at the local museum, and I suspect Clemence is as happy as a clam in having thus neatly secured the other frame for what purpose only she and God know. All I know is that I shall never see the other frame again until, in all probability, it will suddenly turn up for no apparant reason, and she will be presenting it to me as did J. F. H. Clayborne did with the wedding present to a member of the Minor family, after having forgotten that a few years before he had borrow the same papers from the bride's parents, reported them as destroyed in a fire, and then finally made much fuss and feathers in offering them as a gift to the blushing bride. I am to firmly established in the realization that I shall never understand these strange and fascinating people to ever suppose I shall figure out what the artist has up her sleeve. And furthermore I fall too neatly into that old adage "Always a bride's maid, never a bride".

I forgot to mention regarding the enclosures that they are from yesterday's post, for something happened to delay today's incoming postal items, so I reckon tomorrow I shall have a batch, including particulars from Cousin Josephine, et al.

In speaking of the lady doctor, too, I forgot to say she is planning a rest beginning the Saturday after next when she and Don plan to take a week out to drive to Boston to visit her parents. They route they plan to follow covers only 1,750 miles each way, twice 1,750 to be covered within a week, and, in case you might have forgotten already, I shall repeat, that this is contemplated as a rest. Working as constantly as she does and at all hours of the day and night, I can only wonder how she keeps going, and just when the final and complete crackup will occur. Isn't it a pity such a good mind should be so thoughtlessly worn to a frazzle and snuffed out.

Asie from Mrs. Combs and a few white people, several of my negro friends from the Little River country passed this way for a brief call. The Dark Duke asked me if I had heard talk about Melrose on the radio last night about 9N30. I hadn't. He wasn't sure of the station and as he hadn't been paying much attention to what was being said until he heard Melrose mentioned he could give me no other idea about the subject matter than some folks had found it an interesting place to make a round. Publicity is a form of advertising and I hope nobody else heard the broadcast, for I am hoping too many road runners ton't head out in this direction over the week end. After all according to her next to the last letter, Robina is likely to come and according to my radio, the Monroe schools may open this year on a schedule earlier by a month than usual, thus terminating Kate Perkin's summer vacation prematurely, and probably throwing her in this direction about Saturday if she carries out her annual custom. And what with Joe Henry scheduled for the same date, we scarcely need to drum up an extra passers by.....

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3730

Thursday, July 28th, 1949.

Memorandum
May I tell you that the postman came through today making up for lost time by bringing me a package which convinced me that I had read my calendar wrong and that in reality it was my birth day. I shall resume my Tender Leaf sessions with an added degree of "Keelness", and already I have refreshed myself too often with the little cadies of which, I suspect, none of my smaller friends will get any unless they hurry hurry. How kind of you to think of me so enchantingly.

As for the three little packages enclosed in wrappings, I suspect I know what they are, but I am setting them aside on my holding shelf, awaiting a note from you confirming my anticipation as to what they are and what is to be done with them.

As for the "Two Companions", it must be that I failed to tell you to keep it in your own library if you cared to, or lend it to anyone, if, unlike me, you chance to know someone who has both time and inclination to read books. I certainly intended stress in this point when I forwarded the book to you, but I reckon I must have neglected to do so, and probably skipped reference to it later, too, when you mentioned having finished it.

But since my failure to mention this matter has resulted in today's birthday celebration, I reckon I have but a half hearted conviction when I express the wish that I had been more particular.

All in all, it has been a somewhat hurly, burly day, with nothing especial to underline any particular segment of it, but the whole thing so broken up that my mind seems a little confused. Early, early this morning I journeyed to Arenbourg where I thought it well to get a couple of men to assist us in felling some of the larger weeds. At dawn the place was really a glorious mess, what with weeds entirely out of hand, but the cultivated things equally so. This year the nandinas are going to have plenty of clusters of red berries, for already the green berries fortell the winter hues. And the little drive on circle designed eventually to stand before Les Maisons du Seigneur and de la Reine was gay enough with crepe myrtles in flower, mostly purple

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and watermelon red. The first one I took hold of proved to have a fine wasp's nest in it, so I just naturally let that one bloom on without further admiration.

The mimosas are in the nature of a sight, their arms spread out ever so suggestive of the conventional Chinese letter made up of two strokes of the brush suggest, ing a bird in full flight heading into the sunset. I guess the spread of a couple of them is from 20 to 30 feet at least, so you may readily judge that they are doing alright. As for the pears and persimmons, they seem to be just fine, but the pears are getting out of hand a little. Some of them, in spite of all the heat and humidity, have gone muleish and refused to budge an inch, while some of the others are apparently trying to see just what a spectacle they can put on. One of them 5 feet tall a couple of months back is now 10, and another must be at least 18. Let us have a good drought some day, and the present contrary ones will for no known reason, suddenly start making up for lost time.

Well, it was back and forth from Melrose to Arenbourg, and pilgrims and so on to boot, so that I shall sleep without being rocked much tonight, but happy withal for the work accomplished by our helpers whom I have paid tonight for their day's work, and shall employ one other day, on Friday or Saturday, to concentrate on my specialty, Johnson's Grass. Among other things cluttering up my day was the arrival of my newly done over sofa which looks quite nice. As Celeste had purchased the slip cover material, she was naturally interested to see the finished product, and so she and Madam Regard came over, arriving just as I had his my third shower for the day. But they thought it was pretty and it pleases me, so I guess everyone is satisfied.

Dr. Knipmeyer passed this way as usual. He had no especial news but did say his pleasure in passing this way has increased from week to week as he seems coming into being so many things he heard the Madam say during the past year that she would like to see accomplished.

The enclosure is rather curious. I have responded, saying I have found the one purse containing what appears to be a passport and other personal papers, which I have forwarded together with the five dollars which were enclosed in her letter. As her armoire is locked and I haven't the key, getting into the thing isn't easy, but what with the Madam having gone through it twice, and Sam Brown too many times it is doubtful if there is much left. Why she shouldn't want me to do the business and how she hit upon Eugene's wife, whom she has never seen, I can't imagine.... Lyle always used to say there must at least be a baby's skeleton in the armoire, and possibly he is right....

3732

Memorandum

Tucked away under lock and key in my armoire rests today's mail. Occasionally shafts of search lights beyond the white garden penetrate gaps in the bamboo hedge. For two or three hours before sunset, airplanes were weaving intricate patterns overhead, as they rose up above the tree tops from the fields across Cane River where they were dusting cotton. On this side of the river the presence of too many pecaners prevent the planes from effectively sifting down their insecticides, and so the tractors are dishing out the same ingredients on this side. My secretary is among the group including Ezra, Elam, Little King, Bookie and so on. I know not how late they will be thus engaged, and as it is already getting along toward 9, I assume we shall not get around to desk work before the morrow, what with dust work coming first.

I attribute the work of the planes this evening to the very odd assortment of feathered guests who came to dine with Grandpa on the back gallery about sun down. I had brought him a couple of steak sandwiches, knowing he wouldn't consume both of them but thinking a bird or two might make a round during the supper hour. Apparently the instinct of self preservation is already in operation, for I almost immediately had an assortment of guests whose presence is difficult to imagine at the same board, many of them having come in by way of escaping the poison, I suppose. There were three mocking birds, two cardinals (neither of them a Spellman), four bluejays, three quail and a large bird which I took to be either an owl, certainly out early, or a young eagle whose usual itinerary should have placed him above the planes. It didn't take such a gather long to help out grandpa, and I am surprised the guests didn't end up by starting in on each other before the food was half gone. But as in flood or forest fire, the common danger from the dust seemed to remove their predatory impulses and here they dined in the most peaceful fashion.

Today, remarkable to relate, was without rain. Accordingly I got in some extra licks again at Arenbourg where, if circumstances is favorable, I shall undertake further efforts on the morrow. The riot of weeds persists, and yet the advances made on those surrounding some of the younger trees has been sufficient during the past two days to make them ever so much more important looking.

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I returned your box to you today, containing nothing of any importance, although I did neglect to remark that the newspaper somewhere in its columns has a reference to Josephine monette.

From the enclosure, you will note that Ora (Mrs. R. B. Williams, follows through in perfect timing so far as the quest for the little hand gin goes. She will pass this way on the morrow, and I shall explain to her the possibility that the little gin may somehow have found its way to Penland. Since she is passing that way for a little vacation, it should be simpler for her to explain the status of the item to la Morgan. Since Penland is not a center of cotton culture, the thing may not mean so much there as it would in the African House where probably many more people interested in such a contrivance would see it during the year. If it should be there, Ora can explain the situation to your friend, Miss Lucy, and I am content to leave it to her to decide whether it should remain in Penland or be returned to Melrose.

By dint of much application, I have snatched off sufficient time to get half way through the Soourby Swann. It is really marvelously done. Something tells me there will be little opportunity to get around to further delights in that direction over the week end, what with the probability that Miss Kate (perkins) will be here, Miss Robina tomorrow, Joe Henry and the Rands, quite aside from passing pilgrims and friends of deeper hue who for one reason or another have expressed the wish to see me at some time during Saturday or Sunday. But I shall be glad when the week end is over and I can relax in the comparative calm of having my house turned up side down for a painting job which will probably begin in the middle of the week. The Melrose gardens, too long neglected because of the rains, are quite out of hand again and should come in for their share of attention this week, too, and while I shall probably end up by letting quite a bit of grass grow under my feet both at Melrose and Arenbourg during the next week or so, still, I shall do what I can to let nothing come to a complete standstill, for I am really feeling as fit as a fiddle, although not precisely in a mood to play.

Thirty million efforts on my part and Arenbourg's would not go half way in suggesting the pleasure coming our way when between this paragraph and the one above, my wandering "secondary" passed this way out of the night to assist in exploring you grand communication of Sunday last past, together with all enclosures. Now Arenbourg is assured of further operations, thanks to the marvelous physical and moral support coming from Lydia's true hand. So many things to talk about, so many things for which I would express my appreciation. It's so grand to be able to build together, and I am impatient to go into a million things at our next sitting. Arenbourg's gratitude and momentarily my goodnight.....

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Sunday, July 31st, 1949.

Memorandum

Thirty million times, may I echo, as from my last Memorandum, would be insufficient to say what a pleasant prospect Arenbourg and I have had over the week end, thanks to none other than Lydia.

And for your letter of Sunday last past, together with the clipping may I say the same. I tucked the whole business away in my armoire after the late Friday night reading, with the view of running through it again on Saturday or Sunday, but Saturday's post was rather heavy and the place sometimes occupied by Mr. Bruew, his secretarily chair, was but completely voided today, and so I await a second reading again on the morrow.

In this note I shall touch on but a point or two covering the contents of your letter. I am certainly entranced at the information regarding your possible use of a "Magic Carpet", whenever circumstances are right. Firmly do I believe that a perfect opportunity will eventually present itself, and I need scarcely repeat that when things are in proper focus in your neighborhood, they will inevitably be in the same state, so far as kicking out the red carpet is concerned along the bend of the river. It is so pleasant to contemplate such possibilities in advance, and the interim between now and then will be the happier for that prospect.

I so much appreciate your kindness in giving me additional particulars regarding the Roosevelt Spellman rumpus, for it touched on several points not made clear to me through radio reports. I have heard several people in this area, formerly not en; enthusiastic over the first lady, declare themselves convinced that the Cardinal "in this instance", that seems to be the qualifying phrase, "in this instance" certainly got off on the wrong foot. As I see it, this attack, so difficult to comprehend for its lack of restraint and stupidity, has gone far to crystallize a large measure of popularity for the lady whose status, although definitely coming to view in a clearer light, might have been rather slower, had not the "man of God" helped the thing along tremendously.

There have been more thunder storms today, with much rain, and because they have been so incessant during the

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past 50 days, radio reception has been far from satisfactory. Today I heard a Columbia report stating that the Boswell papers have been purchased and will be published in their entirety. A crash of lightning knocked out the name of the purchaser, and so I am still in the dark on that point, but I assume it may be some educational institution or some Foundation. I don't know where I got the idea that they had been acquired by the Government in part, but possibly through some speculation as to the desirability of such ownership by someone discussing the treasure at the time they were brought in from abroad.

My week end didn't turn out so badly. Neither Miss Kate, Miss Robina nor Joe Henry passed this way, although Ora and her husband came down on Saturday with the banker Bolton of Alexandria and his wife, the latter a drip with oil millions, and a flock of other "biddies" who blew in about 6:00 as of Saturday night, which is certainly a fine time to go touring, and so considerate of people who might be yearning for the weekly ritual of bath, etc., but then these were acquaintances of sister's and so strange concepts of pilgrim courtesy is not so surprising.

The enclosures you will find interesting and the side one from Mary Lambdin of especial merit, what with the plan of Mistletoe included. I think it would be so nice to make use of the drawing sometime when doing a study of ante bellum houses. How valued would be a like letter penned a hundred years back, and should we eventually include this in something or other in the 1950's, it would be interesting it might prove to someone stumbling over it in 2050. Don't you think it would be nice to share a humming bird chalice with the Mistletoe household, for Mary is as interested in things Audubon as in old houses, and I am sure it would afford her as much pleasure as it would the humming birds of the Natchez traces.

Letter to Celeste from Sister expresses the thought that she and the children would like to come down for several days during the current month, and I have recommended to Celeste that she respond that Joe is scheduled to come "for a week or so", and as she can't abide him, that may or may not be effective. The New Orleans dealer who is bent on sponsoring a show for Clemence in late summer is also threatening to pass of this way. It seems he stems from Holland, of all places, and is said to be ever so nice a person. As for myself, I am hoping to get some paint slapped on things before anyone gets here, what, as you know but too well, is all the attendant excitement about a place during such operations.

The goings and comings of the Vensuelan's floors me in thinking the strain on your menage, or its mistress. Poor you, and please try to conserve strength for your our travels.....

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Monday, August 1st, 1949.

Memorandum

I started to write Monday instead of Memorandum, which suggests I am wool gathering before I start. If my pen suddenly fades out, don't lay the blame on the Royal but just charge it off to sleepiness. It is 9:20 and in spite of the excellent moon outside, Peter isn't rambling. He dropped by half an hour ago to ask if he might listen to some broadcast of a baseball game and now sits in a straight back chair, looking most uncomfortable and fast asleep, and long since have I tuned out the game which didn't seem to be disturbing his dreams in the slightest, although the roar of the crowds was no help to me in attacking my mail.

It has been a marvelous day all blue and gold, with a tempering little breeze at Arenburg where I spent half my time working with Andy at slaughtering weeds. Between jumps between there and Yucca, I stopped for a moment to see how some dusky fishermen were making out at the foot of some willows below our terrace on the margin of the river. They were bubbling over with their catch which in the hour or two they had been there consisted of 37 fish, averaging two and a half feet in length. Somewhere up or down the river tonight the smell of fish fry must be permeating the air while full stomachs will provide sound rest for the anglers after their outing along the river.

Monday is always an uncertain day on the plantation, so far as those go who are supposed to appear for work. J. H. who never touches a drop is always remarkably lenient with somewhat tipsy hands, and usually lets them put in a day, even though it is obvious they are too high to accomplish much. I saw Fugabou about 6 o'clock this morning, just about three sheets in the wind, running a tractor for all he was worth, and spraying cotton with D. D. T. with as much abandon as though busy with a bottle at the bar.

The Dark Duke and Beau Mack, Ezra, Peter and Murrell came to see me about 10 o'clock. I guess they were bored with no work ahead of them, although they were quite sober. I set them to work at sandpapering some stationary blinds, while I carried on with an ancient piano stool, a square one, on which I am working to batter into a coffee table of sorts. The wood is of the Hawthorne bush, and ever so firm, since the piece is an ante bellum item, and still in good condition in spite of having gone through the Civil War and Heaven knows what all. I have torn off the upholstering and rubbed down the frame, and after I find a likely top board and the thing is rubbed down again, I

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think it will be quite pretty, a little less restrained than our remarkable coffeese table of the First Empire, but withal a pleasant companion for the same, since neither for its first hundred years ever dreamed of metamorphosing into an occasional table, I am sure.

With all the talk I go in for, I can't recall if I mentioned I am fixing to give a few swishes of the white paint brushes to the gallery giving on the white garden. It was on that section the boys were sandpapering for lack of any other amusement while I was all over Melrose, Yucca and Arenbourg. On returning from the latter, but before reaching the gallery, and still within the shadow of the bushes, I overheard the Dark Duke who apparently had just returned from a trip to the cistern say to his associates:

"Listen, you all. I don't mind bein' a member of this here Crow Convention. But conversation and nothin' but is pure God Damned. What's all uses had ought to doots a little m'les more work and a little less chin music."

I wonder if I ever identified the Dark Duke other than Peter's brother, whom everyone calls Long, but whose real name is Wilson Batiste. For like Josephine, the Dark Duke of Modena was in Children of Strangers, too, the black boy who used to sleep all day and finally married some no account girl, as I recall, although it has been so long since I read the book I am a little hazy about sections of it. What a far piece it was from that character in the Cane River novel to the ducal palace of Modena, and back again.

Celeste and Madam Regard spent the day, I guess the whole day, in Alexandria. They asked me to go with them but naturally I declined. Tomorrow I shall have the details on the shopping situation, what the smart restaurant is serving for luncheon, etc, etc ad infinitum, which will be enough.

A sweet letter from the Harnesses which I shall send along if I can find. It contains no especial news in spite of its size pages but does reveal a quality of filial affection which is ever so pleasant.

Negroes are remarkable. I just glanced across the room, only to discover that Peter must have awakened, and seeing me busy, simply and in complete silence, vanished without me ever noticing. And now, after attempting a page from Marcel's perfect presentation by Scourby, I, too, shall fade out into the Land of Dreams.....

I likely top board and the thing is rubbed down again.

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Tuesday, August 2nd, 1949.
Memorandum

According to report, a cold mass of air has been advancing Southward along the Rockies, the front passing over Austin, Texas this afternoon, showering hailstones the size of birds' eggs all over the section and fanning out lower thermometer readings in all directions.

This morning we awoke to a cool 72, and although there has been nothing but blue kies over Arenbourg all day, a spanking North East wind has done much to keep perspiration in check in spite of vigorous exercise.

By sun down, I could think of your quotation from Brad's story, "the battle of the Johnson Grass had been won", but only for the day, and not the season, for Andy and I had been merely cutting it to prevent the seed from scattering further. Like the dragon's teeth in mythology, however, out of the earth will spring another phalanx of soldiery on the morrow, and so before a week is done, the battle will have to be started all over again.

I was reminded today of the old joke about the sign over the fashionable movie house showing first runs which read:

"Cavalcade Spells Success." Annually at this season of the year, a bigger and better sign might well be stretched over Louisiana, reading:

"August Spells Pre; So; Say; Shun; Religious Meetings."

At first dawn this morning, a dark cleft in the bamboo hedge widened a fraction and an ape like figure emerged. It was a friend of mine from the little river region who fascinates me by the marked similarity of his face and the way he uses his arms and legs which, on sight, takes one's mind instinctively to the gorilla country of Belgian Africa. Ampling across the green sward toward Yucca, he clumsily laid hold of a lawn mower standing hard by the house, and using the handle as a knocker, tapped three times on the gallery. He came, he explained, to let me know that services were being held at St. Augustine every night this week, and that they would be continued next week at St. Mary's, on the Bayou. He said they wanted to get to "jine" the Church this year so they could have a good baptisin' and a better "So; say; shun". He said if I would come to the service one night, more folks would attend and the Reverend Gilley who is conducting the Revival would like me to sit with him "on the high up place" and talk a little if I would.

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I don't know the Rev. Gilley very well, but I know I would like him if we got better acquainted. He is one of 8 or 10 brothers, all of whom, except the Reverend, have been in jail for murder, rape, assault and battery and the Lord knows what all. The Gilley family seems to suggest that while in respectable white families one "black sheep" may appear, in the ebony hued Gilley family, darkened the more intense by crime, one "white sheep" may come forth, and the Reverend is said lamb..

At noon two other members of the Baptist persuasion from the same region passed this way with a similar request, and it looks as though I had better prepare myself to become a circuit rider in the style of old Lorenzo Dow or else decline all invitations. I dislike the thought of accepting one invitation and declining others naturally. Some upset in the delivery of paint for slapping on the inside of this house has made it evident the big excitement will not get under way this week, and so, what with a nice new moon and the promise of company to and from the services may shape things up so I can attend a couple of meetings.

A Baptist "Man of God" once confided to me that the birthdays of the majority of the children in his Sunday school fell in April and May, a circumstance he attributed with pride to the "moving power of the Lord". But when one of the Melrose youth's became the proud papa of three babies by three different ladies, the old stork making the three delivery trips on the same day, some doubt was expressed by more sedate segments of colored "Sistern and Brethern" as to whether God alone had had a finger in the Revival pies.

I saw Celeste and Madam Regard momentarily. The shopping and dining proposition in Alexandria surpassed anything in the past twenty five years, so, as anticipated, it spelled something or other. Momentarily there is much talk about how pleasant it would be to run out to California as soon as the heat of summer has lessened. I was asked if I wouldn't like to join them in such a jaunt. In response I ungraciously expressed the hope I would never have to journey west of Cane River, a slight exaggeration, of course, but when I head out for the Painted Desert and points toward the setting sun, I shall probably be rather "choosy" about my companions.

Once or twice during the past couple of days I have heard some reference to the Spellman Roosevelt tilt, but in each instance, I have been so sleepy I couldn't tell for the life of me on the following day what the import of the remarks were. The whole subject must be something of a hot potato for columnists and commentators serving the general public, since the Church mustn't be offended and Mrs. Roosevelt the obvious winner in the contest. This must be a field day for Pegler and the anti Roosevelt groups. It would be interesting to visit half a dozen news reel theatres in as many sections of the country, where the Cardinal and the First Lady appear on the screen, just to listen or feel the audience's reaction.....

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Wednesday, August 34e, 1949

Memorandum

One of those hurly burly days when seemingly little things accomplished but the activity is not unlike the squirrel whirling his revolving cage at a mile a minute, and terminating the business by coming out right where he went in. Fortunately friends and guests did begin arriving until late morning, giving me a go at Arenbourg early in the morning and an opportunity to do a few things about Yucca and Melrose before the cage started turning.

There were two or three people for noon dinner. I only recall a Mr. White of the Federal office of R. E. A. I like him very much and although he had visited the place before, he wanted to make another round of the African House. The other guests accompanied us.

As Mr. Brew was leaving Yucca, following the reading of the mail, as between Mr. White's departure and the ringing of the plantation bell, Mrs. Combs and Celeste dropped in.

They had just gone when Mrs. Rand with her two sisters, Julia and Willie passed this way. They wanted me to go to the camp to bid some of their guests but I declined since Celeste had asked me if I would give a tour to some of her friends who, although scheduled to arrive at three thirty, actually got here at five. There were guests at the big house for supper, some of J. H.'s friends, but I never did see them, what with being busy with Celeste's contingent who were exceedingly kind and dumb, people from Indianapolis.

In between times there had been three or four requests from negroes, advise on what to do about this or that in the garde (n) and so on. In short, now that night has come on and no one is about save old Grandpa whose yellow coat seems even more golden sitting on the doorstep just beyond the rays of the electric lamp on one side and the rays of the moon, filter, shining through the banana leaves on the other.

Mrs. Rand, I discovered after she had departed, had had someone bring the newly conditioned Underwood from her car to Yucca without having mentioned the delivery to me. I haven't even peeped under its new cellophane cover, but I know Dr. Rand must have had it put in perfect condition, and it is going to seem like getting into a pair of comfortable old slippers when I get around to try it. It was certainly lovely of Dr. Rand to have carried it off on the understanding that his son, Horace, would attend to cleaning it for me. I am perfectly certain that in spite of all the books Lyle, H. T. Kane and the rest have pounded out on it, it will turn out to be

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practically re;born.

The enclosure from Miss Nellie hold much of interest, aside from her usual charm. You will note that at long last, Miss Jeanne is dead. Isn't it odd, in view of all the friends I have in Natchez, and good ones, too, except in correspondence, that I have to receive such news by way of Atlanta.

And so another figure, always shadowy, in matters revolving about the Goat Castle Murder Mystery, passes from the worldly scene. As sister of Duncan Minor, Jeannette Minor McDowell seldom did figure in reports covering the various investigations covering the murder but the search light of sensationalism swung close enough to her to make it uncomfortable. In her was somehow the perfect blend of Surget and Minor qualities, the propensity for getting more and more when already a million; aire and the inability to get any pleasure out of all her wealth. One might recall that Miss Nellie is her oldest and best friend, and yet, as Miss Nellie states, Miss Jeanne has left all her money to kin folk, and not a one of them can stand an old plantation home and they all accordingly loath Oakland. It is the oil that is being pumped out of Miss Jeanne's plantations that interest them and it will be a miracle if Oakland's goose isn't already cooked.

I recall so vividly the last afternoon I spent alone with her. She talked at length about the old days when she was born in 1853 and the various people of the '50's whom she knew in the 1860's and 1870's. But I must get to recalling the details or this Memo will turn into a history of ante bellum days in old Natchez.

I do not have an opportunity at the moment to make a note regarding the architect and builder, named Gray. If you will make a note of his name in full sometime, I shall be glad. He, it seems, was the builder of the Grange, that marvelous old house, probably now gone to ruin, one of whose remarkable features delighting me being the round window in the chimney, just above the mantle piece, a clever piece of engineering, since in spite of the window, the fireplace worked perfectly, the flues apparently going up on each side of the barrier made by the circular window slap in the middle of the chimney above the hearth. Apparently Miss Nellie could not recall the name of the St. Francisville house where Audubon taught, Oakley, a house that delighted the Madam and Lyle but which never appealed to me particularly, being a little too much on stilts and a little too gaunt to suit my tastes. I wonder if restoration on that place has ever been undertaken since the State acquired it.

Ho, hum.... So much to talk about and already I have run my course for this sitting. If I could only read what I have jotted down, I would probably tear up this sheet and start afresh, but forgive me for letting it go as it is, and I'll try to do better next time.

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Thursday, August 4th, 1949.

Memorandum:

It is so good to have your card and to know that your were able to scramble aboard a bus, quitting the sweltering city for the vaster spaces around Greenwood. Heat is heat any old place, but somehow summer heat in the city is ten times more enervating than in the country. There is something about urban centers, I reckon it is all the brick, steel, asphalt and the Lord knows what all, that tends to retain the warmth throughout the night, in contrast to almost any rural retreat where the fluctuation of the thermometer tends to bring a measure of relief with every sun down. I shall be so glad if you found respite in the country and so could build up a little resistance to the sizzling you will encounter on returning to town.

Possibly some of our current coolness may shortly spread in your direction. Last night I know not how far things dropped but this morning at 6 o'clock it was 68, a most surprising circumstance for August in Louisiana. I suppose this is the fringe of the cold wave that scattered hailstones all over Texas a day or two ago. This afternoon we had another good shower, which must seem commonplace to our Arenbourg friends or those of them who were not in residence a year ago when the drought persisted from May to November.

Oh, by the way, you will notice I am back on the good old Underwood which moves along like a breeze. I think it was grand of Dr. Rand to lend such an invaluable arm in this matter and naturally I wrote and told him as much.

And from San Diego arrived the vase, which is really a fine piece of work. The grain in the maple is delicate and lovely, while the stainless steel base and rim at the top sets the whole thing off to part ular advantage. It is rather smaller than I had envisioned, since 10 or 12 inches in height isn't excessive for a vase. There isn't anything to suggested to the uninitiated that it was made from a ten pin. Mr. Harness cut off a part of the top knob and the base, and in mounting it, turned the thing upside down, giving the greater circumference at the top rather than the bottom, as you may readily imagine when considering a ten pin standing on its head. I am crazy about the lines and the finish is exquisite. I must eventually write them a note of acknowledgement before folding up my beard tonight.

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Ora, - Mrs. R. E. Williams, telephoned me this afternoon to say they are planning to leave for Penland a week hence, on Friday the 12th. She said they expected to spend the first night out at Devereux, where they had written for reservations. I told her I would take pen in hand tonight to drop Miss Myra a little note, which may lend a little something to whatever personal contents contribute in such first meetings.

Dora's letter isn't particularly interesting, but I can pass along news via Atlanta to him and tell him the Colonel Ewing of the Shreveport Times is much more reactionary than Wall Street ever was, - a fact which he seems to have gathered without needing any information from me on that score.

The day being Thursday, Dr. Knipmeyer tried to entice me into accompanying him to Magnolia to dine with Miss Sally, but I had too many irons in the fire to take time out for such a prolonged social round. He told me news of Miss Sally's nephew, Clarence Pierson, who tried to commit suicide a few weeks ago. As has been the case in similar unsuccessful attempts, the wound Clarence inflicted on himself turns out to be rather worse than had it been mortal, for the shot he fired into his head destroyed all motor power, so that the brain reacts not at all to any impulse to move arm or leg. In consequence he cannot lift a finger by himself, requires constant attendance, of course, and although practically unconscious all the time, still continues to live on. What a pity in such a case that an extra powerful sedative cannot be administered.

Somehow, and I don't know if I am correct or not, I have always thought of Iowa as being largely Republican, in spite of its prominent citizen, Henry Wallace. Accordingly I was a little surprised last night, when tuned in on Des Moines to hear a one minute advertisement of the third installment of Mrs. Roosevelt's article in McCall's. Possibly the advertisement wasn't intended especially for Iowans, since the Des Moines station serves a circle whose diameter stretches from North Dakota to Louisiana, but I assume other stations about the country in between those extremes may well be carrying like advertisements over the air. From all this I gather that McCall's is finding increased circulation merits wider publicity for these articles, and Ora told me that in some cities the several pages of the last issue, with a special cover, are being given away on the streets, the publishers feeling that anyone reading one article would be more than likely to want to read the balance. Copies of these extra printed pages were being distributed in Natchitoches last week and I have asked one or two people to try to secure a copy for us.

I had sandpapered so much stuff before 9 this morning, and apparently retained so much of the dust under my nails that Celeste offered me a manicure while I was having coffee with Madam Regard. What a business, especially as I jumped from the manicure into digging in the dirt bare handed. But every little helps and the step was in the right direction. Do so hope your week end was cool

3744

Friday, August 5th, 1949.

Memorandum:

More rain today.

I have a slight headache. The cause is so obvious. J. H. went to Shreveport today. He brought home two of the Wenk children who tell me they plan to stay two weeks, one week alone and the following week with their parents who will be down to stay with them. I fervently hope they may be in error regarding the latter point. Is it any wonder I need a bromo.

Beth Williams Cloutier (Mrs. Vernon Cloutier) came down from Beaufort this morning at 9, bringing a guest with her. They made a tour and were still here when the dinner bell rang at 11:30. Beth says every time she used to come here in the old days, she went back home with sufficient inspiration to last a month but that before leaving today she felt just as deeply that she has a whole winter's work out for her.

What set her off was talk about the Prudhomme family tree on which she has assembled complete data from the first to the last Prudhomme in this section. I gave her a couple of samples to consider, - that of the Last Dauphin, the Archer family and the Sir William Dunbar family, the two latter of Natchez, of course.

She was entranced at the prospect of doing the Prudhommies along lines suggested by these various examples, and as the Sir William Dunbar one seemed to appeal to her most, I made her take it home with her and promised to lend her aid, should she run into stumbling blocks. I believe she draws very well, and will undoubtedly be able to make her own tree, and as she has all the trunk, branches, limbs, twigs and leaves already assembled, I feel certain it will be just a case of one, two, three with her.

And so Beaufort will get a new decor for its library and Natchitoches will get a complete account of the Prudhommies, who, being kin to everyone, will actually be in possession of a history of the Parish itself from the time of its inception.

It is always pleasant when someone is as enthused as was she, and I must say she went home bubbling.

I am sorry I forgot to enclose Dor's letter in yesterday's

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mail. I shall enclose it herewith, along with another which is of no especial interest, save that it seems to indicate a slowly widening rift between the two ladies in question. It does seem a little odd that Caroline should suppose I might be lonely, for quite aside from the suggestion on Robina's part that some people may pass this way to seek me, Melrose in itself has sufficient pulling power to clog up things, - with or without me.

And while on the subject of those who pass by, I must tell you something Celeste told Madam Cloutier and me this morning. She said that recently at some swanky party in town, one lady of some social standing on meeting Celeste said she had something on her mind that had worried her for some time, a point which Celeste might settle for her once and for all. The lady, it seems, had not long since made a tour of Melrose where I had received her but somehow she got the impression that I was a mulatto, a fact that puzzled her much since she felt I was alright, and yet somehow the idea persisted in her mind. I didn't ask the identity of the bag, but was altogether enclanted to discovered that I had sung my hymns about the mulattoes so well that the listeners actually went away convinced that I was one.

The presence of the elegant guest book for the African House which J. H. brought me suggested that I might as well have my friends enter their names, - my colored friends, in a guest book for Yucca. And, no sooner said than done, I had Peter print his name tonight, and my "secondary", as starters. And what did I use. Well, I thought nothing could be more fitting than the big old Audubon volume, most of which is blank pages, which you may remember from when Manhattan rather than Melrose was home. I think this sort of a guest book ought to be really interesting, what with many of my best friends being unable to write, or if able to print, rather uncertain about the whole business of getting down their names and addresses. I was perfectly enchanted when Peter heading off the thing, spelled the name of his residence as "Melbose".

What with pilgrims and the rain today, I didn't get much accomplished in the gardening section, contenting myself with an early round at Arenbourg where except for a bit of weed work, I didn't do much. Back home, and when finally "lonesome" for a moent, I undertook the painting of the punka that graces the gallery giving on the White Garden. Like so many other undertakings, it was the preparation that took up most of the time, for there were billions of tacks that had to be removed from the wooden frame work before I could sandpaper the think and Peter could help in painting said punka. That suggests something by way of digressions, - shouldn't we write a poem, with apologies to Mother Goose, beginning "Peter, Peter punka painter
"Stabbed and shot and getting fainter...."

But I am digressing too much, and you can finish it. In removing the tacks the aparantly had held cloth over the fram in ante bellum times, I discovered three distinctly different types of ancient ones, suggesting three different coverings at various times. Surely they must have worked the old thing for all it was worth. W

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Sunday, August 7th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Showers yesterday, heavy showers today, and tonight it is still raining. I reckon there will be mighty little cotton but the Arenbourg children have all the luck in their infantile period.

In Louisiana and especially in the Cane River country, 1949 will be the year when the rich will get richer and the poor poorer. In the horticultural brackets, you and I, because we feel rich in realizing our plants are flourishing, will feel the richer for the firm establishment they have made for themselves this year. In the financial sections, the rich being secure in their entrenched wealth, will weather the cotton failure, not only by retaining their own fat acres, but also by acquiring additional one from plenty of their neighbors who, insolvent at the beginning of the year, will be forced to relinquish their property before 1950 dawns. Surely it is an ill wind that blows no man good.

Well, the Joe Henrys have come, as of Friday night, and gone as of Sunday morning. They both were enchanted with the new interior of the African House and pined for me to further other projects. I have a couple up my sleeve requiring some physical toil which they may get to see on their next round.

The rains, fortunately discouraged pilgrims to a large extent although, even so, there were enough, and several bathches I never even saw. I guess Pat must have lent a hand to the business.

I gave a quick go-round to a Mr. and Mrs. Door or Dorr, - but no kin of Uncle d'Or. They are Shell Oil from Lake Charles, La., and were nice, but I was in a hurry and so we merely breeze through the place. Roark Bradford's cousin, his wife and mother, all from Dallas, and heading for New Orleans, were also here, and the new Sheriff of Rapides Parish, - one Kelly, with his wife and mother, and a Miss Ball who admitted being descendant of the Washington-Ball family. Sheriff Kelly seems rather young for such a political job in the Parish in which Alexandria is situated, for he is but 28. He asked if he might come back for another round on Monday or Tuesday, so I reckon he liked what he saw, although he didn't see too much, what with an impending shower in the offing.

The attached clipping is from the Natchitoches En erprise as of August 4th, 1949. Whoever wrote the article doesn't seem to

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have heard that only God glorifies butterfly lilies.

On Friday, when Madam Cloutier saw the Canr River Primitives, she was enthralled and immediately wanted to the name and place of residence of the painter. There are elegant portraits at Beaufort, not to mention some fine contemporary flower sturied and the Cardinals by J. J. A., but the Primitives seemed to demand a place there, too. If Clemence sticks to her guns, and it doesn't matter much if she does or doesn't, she will send Madam Cloutier back to me, should a sale threaten to develope. Having engineer her thus far, I shall be glad to contend with possible white purchasers, should there be any in the future, while in the end Clemence would probably end up without having to bother with establishing sales prices of which she hasn't the vaguest notion as to scale, tending to toss away a masterpiece for a dollar if pressure is put on her. Between Dora and us-es, we certainly have enough of her things, and the cream of them, I should say, as up to now, and I am glad my current show in the African House embraces some of the most interesting in a folk ways way, for their presence here will get attention directed in the proper channels betweter than in other places, I imagine.

The Dark Duke came to see me for a few minutes today. He always tosses off some colorful combination of words that delights me. Today he was talking about having at one time worked on a road building project between here and Bermuda on which one of the gang bosses was a hill billy, who shouted and screamed with great gusto at the workers. It was at this point that Log used an expression that entranced me, when, in quoting the boss he said:

"Hey, you niggers, hurry along here with them Georgia buggies."

Now it turns out, according to my informant, that a "Georgia buggy" is nothing less than a wheelbarrow. It seems that when negroes land in jail in Georgia, the first job they are assigned is pushing wheelbarrows, medium sized ones for workers not too much disliked, larger ones for those whom someone or other has a racial grudge against. And in the latter instance, the man with the load, impossible for anyone to stand up un er for long, is harried until he drops, either from sheer exhaustion or from sun stroke, and thus is eliminated, and his loss a source of satisfaction to the one whose enmity he has been so unlucky to encounter. No wonder Georgia is not among the more popular States with people of color.

At 2 this morning, Little King tapped on my door, asking if he might leave a few of his things on my back gallery until morning. He and his wife appear to have fallen out. Poor children, and with a baby on the docket for this autumn. But perhaps everything is all patched up again by this late hour, as so often is the case amo among people who seem to harbor grudges not at all.....

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Monday, August 8th, 1949.

Memorandum: A fairly active morning, what with the clouds having marched off during the night, and a pleasant enough but not too productive afternoon.

Among other callers was my friend from the L. S. U. Medical School Library, - one Postelle.

I think I mentioned he is spending six weeks along the Joyeous Coast. I smiled to myself when the inhabitant of the city threw up his hands at his lack of sensing what country life was like before coming up here this summer. His intention was to get caught up with his research and his writing, but has discovered after five or six weeks in the Cane River country that the problem of being alone so that one may get something undertaken if not finished is something in a class all by itself.

He said he ran away from the Lambre camp this afternoon to escape people, while tomorrow morning Madam Cloutier is receiving him at Beaufort and in the afternoon some of the Prudhomes are entertaining the Postells at a watermelon festival. That, as he explained it, does not get books started. And so he now looks with eyes of yearning toward the seclusion of the Crescent City to which he plans to return in another couple of weeks.

He says he is astonished at the amount of material he has uncovered concerning the use of drugs in ante bellum times, but even as is the case in so many wonderful stories about Natchez, the particulars come from members of the family, and although pretty well authenticated, one would be silly to set them down since no publisher would run the risk of libel suits, which would probably follow publication.

I nearly swallowed my Coca Cola bottle when he casually remarked that Madam Cloutier told him she accounted for the presence of so many mulattoes in the Caje River to the fact that they had been begotten by bachelors. First I peer up the road and then down, contemplating the 7 miles of solid mulatto population on this side of the river, and seven miles on the other, and in answer to his question as to what I was looking for I confessed that I was searching for nothing, merely contemplating the number of mulatto families I knew, and mulling over in my mind that up until that moment I had never realized there were so many bachelors in see world.

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But swinging from light chocolate to the darker pigmentation, I must remark about the unending revelations that come to the surface from time to time, revealing their difference, as opposed to most white people, in matters of importance. Bluff is a negro who is either exceeding clever or exceedingly dull, and no one with whom I am acquainted, white or colored, can agree on that point. Be that as it may, Bluff who is probably between 50 and 55 is frequently asking me, and undoubtedly others of the white race, to engineer him on to an Old Age Pension. Yesterday morning while J. H., Joe and Pat, along with a flock of negroes, were gracing the front gallery of the store, Bluff again expressed his wish to get on a Pension, and Joe, wondering how far Bluff might be from the required 65 years, asked him his age.

Quite casually, and as a matter of course, Bluff said:

"I don't know. I left it at home."

Joe hooted, naturally, but it didn't strike Bluff as humorous, for to him, one's age is some set of figures one sets down on a slip of paper, to be brought forth for consideration only when white folks in official positions start make a fuss about what the paper indicates. I have often thought this might be one reason why so many local negroes have an age-less appearance, and why so often a gentleman of color or a lady of like hue seem to find actual age differences of no interest when selecting a wife or husband.

I got off quite a batch of mail before folding up my beard last night but as the postman passed this way an hour earlier than usual this morning, I reckon Sunday's Memorandum along with the other letters, was probably posted in Bayou Natchez or Natchitoches. It was nearly 11 when I had finished my last letter last night, and after that I knocked off a couple of pages of publicity for the Clemence Show, to be published in the Natchitoches papers. If I really had good sense, I probably wouldn't start beating the drum at a time when things are so by sizes and sevens here and the painting of this house has been started. But I inserted a line about "by appointment only", and while that went hold back friends and acquaintances, it will probably slow up the run-of-the-mill road runners.

Sunday must have been another hard week end for Peter didn't appear for work on the plantation but dropped by here around 8, whereupon I set him to painting the punka another coat, and touching up some weak spots in the Bindery and the African House.

It is 9:30 and as my Mr. Brew hasn't put in an appearance as yet, and my Reading Machine has gone into a stage whisper, I guess I had better knock off a couple of letters, and then try to catch the 10 o'clock news. But I notice the moon is up and I certainly would like to sit for a moment on the terrace at Arenbourg. And so things turn in the Cane River country....

3750

Tuesday, August 9th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Pay no attention to the date, suggesting deep summer, for aside from the heat, there is a Christmas atmosphere about tonight, thanks to the generosity of a friend who provided me with lovely white Christmas tree candles a while back, little imagining at the time, I reckon, that with the failure of the electricity, they would be brought forth to make their bow at this season of the year.

At 1:30 this afternoon, Celeste asked me if I might be going to "Uncle Phanor's" on La Cote Joyeuse tonight for the Silver Wedding services of Alphonse Prudhomme. She said she was heading for town to play cards but would be back in time to take me if I cared to ride with her. I scarcely have to indicate my answer, but now I am wondering if the Prudhommes planned an quite bellum party to the point of providing Oakland with candles, for the current failed a couple of hours before sundown, and quite aside from lights, something tells me the punch will not be remarkable for the tinkling of ice cubes. But the moon at this moment must be tracing delicate traceries through the pretty avenue of live oaks before the old mansion and as the gallery is ample the guests ought to be able to enjoy their watermelon and cake and ice cream in even more romantic mood out of doors than under a glare of mazdas inside. The only drawback I can think of revolves about the fact that most the the Prudhommes I know are too dull to be romantic, but that is merely a detail.

The Weather Bureau notwithstanding, we have a second day in a row without showers and at 3 tomorrow morning, Pat will head out for Natchitoches with two or three men to put twelve hundred pounds of D. D. T aboard an airplane which will begin dusting the Melrose broad acres about the time I am heading up the Bermuda Road. It was deliciously cool at Arenbourg this morning where I busied myself until contending with the privet hedges which are practically out of control, I have neglected them so scandalously this year. But the higher the grow the greater the screen they throw up, and so I don't mind much if I don't get them back in line before pecane time.

Back home, I busied a couple of men most of the morning, moving four or five palms which, when eventually settled in their new places, will make a straight line, - East West, - using the old lant (lantern) before the big house, as the pivotal point. They have always staggered around in a hap hazard zigzag along the same general course, but had been stuck in the ground at random from time to time with no thought of symitry, and ended up by

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finding themselves pushing Chinese magnolias into contortions as their height increased. Now we can forget them,-- both the palms and the Chinese magnolias, and no matter how any or all of them want to strike out skyward, there will be ample room for them to develop without cramping each other's style.

It is difficult to believe, but I think there were no pilgrims today. At noon I went on the assumption there would be none, and casting off my shirt, I mounted a ladder on my back gallery and began slapping on white paint, the projecting rooms at each end being the object of my attack. If I had any sense at all, I would wait a day or two when painters would do the job for me, but I was impatient to get the first coat on, and went ahead. Just to give the thing a professional touch, I began by knocking a gallon of white paint slap off the ladder, turning the thing upside down on the floor and benaturally be-spattering myself. But as my pants and shoes were the only raiment I sported, the catastrophe wasn't of imposing proportions, although the mess on the gallery was striking. But there was more paint and additional vigor, and so I daubed ahead until nearly 5 when little Miss Clemence blew in just as I was rising from a kerosene primary soap suds secondary bath. The soap suds have long since been washed away, but the memory of the kerosene I used to remove paint from head to waist line still lingers on.

Clemence brought a couple of pictures for the African House exhibit, and I shall try framing them on the morrow. I asked her to pass this way a week from Wednesday when the Alexandria Garden Club will be here. At the proper moment I shall turn first one section then another, loose on the second floor of the African House where Clemence can receive them and explain, if she can,-- and knowing Clemence I know perfectly well she can,-- just what her pictures are all about. The notice of the show should appear in this week's Matchitoches Enterprise, and I shall provide copies of the article so the members of the Club may have it read to them during luncheon at the Rand Camp just before coming over to the exhibit. I must write Mrs. Rand tonight, for I think she will be glad to arrange her luncheon so this can be readily accomplished, or, should I go to the luncheon, I shall ask someone to read the thing for me after a couple of words of greeting. I know Mrs. Rand will be entranced to know that Clemence will receive at her own show.

And so the day runs out, and if I hadn't planted a flock of narcissus bulbs at Arenbourg this morning after throwing up my hands at the hedge, I should say the painting during the afternoon exercised a new set of muscles for me and for that reason my performance on this machine suffers. Now, if I can only get another break in the pilgrim department on the morrow, I really ought to get a heap of things done. How does your garden grow....

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Wednesday, August 10th, 1949.

Memorandum:

And, if memory serves, I think I closed yesterday's note by asking how your garden grows. I might as well confess that, were I asked the same question, I wouldn't have the vaguest notion so far as giving a correct answer, since today has been productive of nothing save pilgrims and more pilgrims, and even though I board up the front gate tomorrow, Dr. Knipmeyer will slide around through the side one and Sister is supposed to blow in from Shreveport.

Today we have had the third straight one in a row with no rain. Perhaps I had better consult a rain maker to get busy, for no doubt it was the presence of daily showers that frightened away the pilgrims, and I shall have to do something or other to try lopping off a hunk of quiet for myself.

I saw Madam Regard this morning. She said the Silver Wedding at the Alphonse Prudhommes was a vast success, what with billions of candles about and ice clinking madly, in spite of the failure of the electricity. There were flocks of people present, and the silver gifts were so arranged as to appear to advantage, one table reserved for all silver knife and fork gifts, another reserved exclusively for silver goblets, another for silver dishes, and so on and so forth, and all gleaming prettily in the candle light.

I am perfectly contented to take her word for it and content myself with remaining at Yucca for a little chat with you instead.

I talked with Horace Rand this morning, telephoning Alexandria early. He said his father and mother ran over to Florida for a few days. Their daughter took a house there for a couple of months, as she did last summer, and so their little visit will be going back to a familiar spot. They will be up here about Friday, and will probably be making some plans for the entertainment of their Garden Club guests for a week from today.

Horace told me that when he told his father this typewriter required new parts, for Horace was giving it a going over, the doctor had telephoned the Office Supply Company of Alexandria, and asked them to send them out to the house, explaining, I suppose, for whom they were eventually intended, and so they arrived with an itemized bill from Mr. T. T. Garrett, the owner of the concerned, with the bill stamped "No charge". I am glad to say I was able to knock off a note to Mr. Garrett before the postman departed, whoever, aside from being a kind person, Mr. Garrett may be.

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As an average, a tour, if half done, requires about an hour and a half to two hours and a half, and as I compressed five into one afternoon, you may well imagine I found little time for gardening, painting or museum making. But I got in some licks this morning about the time the airplane arrived, and tomorrow morning between 5 and 9 I shall get in a few more.

The mail continues rather heavy but I manage somehow to keep abreast of it. There was a nice long letter from Rudolph which I inadvertently mangled to pieces as Mr. Brew was reading other pieces. He says he has had an ever so busy summer, and as soon as school is out, plans to run over to see his parent at Green Tree, New Mexico, and hopes he may pass this way with a couple of friends "before too long". I shall be ever so glad to see him, but long before summer is done, I shall be equally enchanted if he will leave his acquaintances parked along the highway, unless, as seems unlikely, I shall suddenly get half a dozen projects out of the way.

Of the enclosures, there is not much to be said, for I guess they aren't of any particular interest, but I pass them along regardless so you may keep abreast of the times. If, however, you are pressed for time when running through this note, you may file the others away without losing anything.

At supper tonight J. H. asked me what I thought about the sudden batch of "bachelors" Melrose has suddenly developed. I think I may have mentioned that Little King and his wife seem to have separated, - temporarily, at least. And did I say that my old friend, Elam, aged about 21 or 22, finds himself temporarily, at least, without wife and two children, and that Beau Mack, my tractor driving barber is also bereft of wife and three children, not to mention Clyde Claude Emmett Davis who is equally all by himself. I am not sure, but I am under the impression wives in this area select this season to fly out, and particularly if they have several children, for that will leave the husband without their assistance in picking the cotton crop, and thus they can extract promises, never kept, from the husbands before they will consent to return.

But now the wife has the break from another direction, and especially if she is the mother of a few children, and best of all if no legal marriage has ever been performed, for the Welfare Department puts the mother and children without legal husband or papa on relief rolls immediately, and accordingly the wife, unless she chances to have some affection for her husband, will probably gain rather than lose by removing herself and her children, - and the more the merrier the check for the latter, whereas if she returns to help pick the crop, - a d there wont be much to pick this year, she probably will not get much anyhow.

Well, the merry-go-round rolls around, and what wives Melrose loses she makes up for in pilgrims, and my Reading Machine is out of whack and I have no Tender Leaf tonight, and so I shall splash through a warm shower and tucking a Coca Cola under my arm, fold up forthwith.....

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Thursday, August 11th, 1949.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your fat letter in this morning's post. Tonight it is resting safely in my armchair, so the promise for tomorrow's felicity is guaranteed.

I am delighted to have read the first page and a part of the second before circumstances whisked away my helper. I am glad you like the Arenbourg sun glow goblets, and how nice to think of you as using them often. There is some line from the Persian poem about the clay in the cup that once may have been another's lips, so that when drinking the poet contemplates the possibility that his own of the flesh are pressing those at the rim of the cup. The analogy doesn't apply in the present instance, and yet it suggests one thing that brings quite another to mind. Somehow I picture L. J. joining you sometimes, and when thus jointly used, I am sure you have pleasure in contemplating the dark circles the rim makes in contrast to the milk deeper down in the glass.

The account of your daily routine sounds so crammed and to measured out into a goose step that I shall forever be holding the thought that the week days may travel a hundred fold faster than the ones of the week end. I hadn't realized that your little South American friend was staying with you. I am sure he lends a gleam of sunshine but how well do I know the joy that comes with solitude and the sense of being actually alone.

Some people never understood the Madam's brand of hospitality when she used to withdraw from social contact for hours on end, busying herself about her accustomed interests. Other people sense the routine instinctively and since these were souls who never required others for entertainment, were equally enchanted to go about their own lines of endeavor, so that when the Vigee-Lebrun greenery was thrown aside, all such souls were bubbling over with enthusiasms resulting from their varied pursuits, and conversation accordingly never flagged, as it naturally would have, had everyone remained stuck together throughout the visit. How often have I heard the Madam remark that she thought the most barbarous survival of ante bellum times was that bad habit people clung to, - "coming to spend the day", - and expecting guests and hostess to devote every second to each other without ever giving anyone a breathing spell.

Having been through the decorating process so often in your own apartment, you will know precisely how disorganized I

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feel at the moment when I tell you the only furniture in this room is my desk, one chair, the bed and the armoire, - and all out in the middle of the room. Fugabou and Mr. Brew and Dee-Dee's brother, Wiley, arrived a little after noon, armed with ladders and paint brushes and all the rest of the paraphernalia. They were making pretty good progress in this room, having covered most of the ceiling and one corner of the walls when urgent need for them off somewhere or other on one of J. H.'s Little River plantations, forced them to drop everything and scurry, and so I sit like something washed up from high water, completely dry, - for it has been another cloudless day, but withal in the midst of more trash and disarray than the day Noah decided the the following would be a good one to disembark.

The pilgrims weren't so numerous today, but there was a mean average, but they were of scant importance, for I measure the importance of a pilgrim by his interest in what he journeys to behold, and since these numbers from Council Bluffs, Iowa, were mentally incapable of interest in anything, they were not of the slightest importance, so far as my estimate goes. With good luck, the house will be back in some kind of order before next Wednesday, when a large group is expected, and Once one room is finished, I shall be "all set" for any demands. First off, I had thought of doing the living room, then the bedroom where I write and receive my more intimate friends, then the bath, then the West bedroom and finally the gallery on the White Garden, which I have already daubed up a bit. But on second thought, I figured I would do better to tear up and put back the boudoir first, although, while making up my mind, I had already parked Grandpere on the gallery where he can remain, along with the newly done over sofa and whatnot, until the whole business is finished. The painters declare the place requires two coats, but I am telling them they had better put the first one on sufficiently tastefully, just in case, and at this late hour, I am quite persuaded I shall never let them turn the place upside down a second time if, by some miracle, the first go round is ever completed.

Puny carried away eight pairs of draperies this noon, as Little King and Zelma wanted to do them for me. They are white Lowells, and weigh tons but Little King is a husky youth, and after they have boiled in the wash pot for a few hours, it will simply be a matter of lots of rinsing, and back home they will come.

I got a huge kick out of your salutation as of Sunday, - "distinguished resident guest" - which is among the more paradoxical combinations I have ever ran into. The distinguished part can be skipped without loss but how one can be a permanent resident and a guest at the same time, I can't fathom. In short, Mary Dagget Lake is a pure sight.....

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Friday, August 12th, 1949.

Memorandum: .

Your letter remains tight in my armoire. Tomorrow I shall have such a pleasant day. And in tonight's case, my meandering secretary cannot be blamed for having failed to establish contact. Sister blew in about 4 p.m., to spend the night, and it was I who never showed up at my house when mail time rolled round at the close of day.

The weather remains fair but the humidity high, and from 5 this morning until 10 this evening I remained soaked. A warm bath and cold shower felt so good when at last I got around to call it a day and chat a bit with you before folding up beard.

Were it not for fear of attracting more pilgrims, I might write a couple of paragraphs for the local press in this vein:

Quote: Great Yucca Sun Dial Restored in Melrose White Garden.

But I had better not even start such an article in gest for a projected thought might impell some road runner to head in this way, and I am still picking at this typewriter in vast confusion, for, thanks to the painters, who are dilly-dallying, the place is in a perfect shambles.

But as though to prove that I couldn't be satisfied with such excitement, I snatched at an opportunity presenting itself early this morning when J. H. sent me three stalwart men to do some carpentry work. This was just the thing I had been waiting for, and I grabbed at it madly. Just for the sake of suggestion, we pulled up a few boards on the gallery of the Bindery to suggest work was being undertaken there, and then we assembled electric drills, hardware without end and all the instruments required to transport and consolidate imposing objects. Within a couple of hours we had moved a fluted column to the center of the White Garden and on the top of it had perched an astronomical object, - two great metal circles of steel, one standing upright, and the other, within it, at a 45 degree angle. A coat of white paint was then applied to the great 5 foot circles and the column redecorated, and an arrow laid across the tilted circle to point out the sun's progress.

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It was really a fair sized job, what with the demands upon our engineering prowess to get the column to support such an imposing burden on such a small base. But the things worked out very nicely, and from where I sit I can see a ghost-like pedestal, some 12 or 15 feet in height, above which a ghostly elipse seems to float in the air against the dark backdrop of the bamboo hedge beyond.

Esra, Puny and Will Rogers undertook the business, and consulted me but a couple times on method of execution. I suppose the intelligence of the negro plus his unpredictable reaction to any given circumstance is what fascinates me so much. Each of these men can solve almost any problem, no matter how original, and yet it must be admitted that in some respects they are equally surprising, for one day I handed Esra my keys for the Arenbourg gates, along with others on the same ring, and a couple of days later he casually remarked that he had lost my keys but didn't know where, and now a year later he still hasn't located them. And Will Rogers took a pair of my shoes home to tack down the heel, - last February or March, - and the want of proper nails, he says, has prevented him from accomplishing that seemingly simple job.

As for the great sun dial, I erected the thing as a garden piece, pure and simple, but now, as I gaze out over the White Garden, I realize it will always be less a garden piece than a monument to the ingenuity of my negro friends.

As between this paragraph and the one above, two hours have elapsed, and I am bound to call it a day forthwith. Having seen my light, Puny and Zelma decided this would be a good time to deliver the Lowell draperies they had boiled for me, and so through the bamboo they came, and put them up for me in this room temporarily. And so we chatted a bit and walked with them as far as home, thinking the fresh air and exercise would do me no harm after so much paint and hurly-burly that devolved during the latter part of my day.

And so I fold for the moment, if I can find my way through the heaps of furniture, newspapers cluttering the floor and so on.

Forgive a dull, dull letter. Perhaps I can improve a bit in my next.....

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Sunday, August 14th, 1949.

Memorandum: 5:15 AM. The Greeks may have had a word for it, but me, I calls it burly-burly, and I'se talkin' about life.

Today has been a perfect shambles, what with pilgrims who began early in the morning and somehow contrived to land slap on top of each other, each succeeding wave not giving the earlier ones a chance to recede before a new flock broke over me.

And just as we sat down to supper last night, Mr. Van somebody who has the Royal Street picture gallery, arrived to establish contact with Clemence. It was merely a detail that Celeste had written him, asking him to drop in at any time except on week ends. He remains until Monday.

I went with him and Celeste to call on Clemence. He examined her pictures carefully and is interested in some. Today when J. H. asked him what he thought of the things she had, he said some of them were alright but the cream of her work was hanging in the African House. He inquired if Clemence might let him have some of these. I settled that point immediately by saying the ones in the African House belonged to me and were not for indirect sale or display. Frankly, I must confess I think the man is right about the best ones being in the museum, but I might be prejudiced about them, since I have grown to like them more than I would if they were quite new perhaps.

And while in the field of art, I want to thank you for telling me of your trip to The Cloisters and the tapertries of the Duc de Berri. I am confident your stay at the Cloisters was pleasant and I only regret I could not be along to observe the taperstry treasures of the man whose Tres Riches Heures is so celebrated.

And I am so glad you told me about Madam Roosevelt reference to the egrettes at Hyde Park. Lucky birds that find a haven in that domain. Mr. Van remarked regarding his drive here from New Orleans that he had seen so many quail dead along the cement highway and assumed their death due to the frequent D.D.T. dusting going on there.

Interruption

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As between the turning of this page, I have had several interruptions, and I beg you to forgive me if I repeat myself too often.

Did I mention that Mrs. Renne LaSalle and her son of The Hermitage plantation were among today's guest, bringing with them a Mr. Keller from San Antonio who wrote me some time back following a visit here of Dr. Rand's brother. And did I mention the Rands and Dr. and Mrs. Owens, and the flight of the two doctors to get themselves cameras to take pictures of the sun dial. And, but what's the use.... I am bound to recommend that the Melrose gates be locked on Sundays if this kind of thing keeps up, or else press the Henrys into service, but of course when the Henrys have guests they never can show them about without my presence, since they claim, and are quite honest and true about it, that they don't know anything about the place.

Well, Lord, that isn't all of that, but it's enough of it. I hope I can find some of the little letters I had in mind sending along, nothing of much interest, but pleasant enough little missives. I am ashamed to say that I still have a mountain of mail unopened from what I hope are people whose messages are of secondary interest, a couple from Dora, Madam Lake and so on.

One nice thing about all this excitement is the fact that I am not missing my reading machine which continues to sit on my front gallery, my letters to Baton Rouge Department of Welfare, as agent for the Library of Congress still unanswered. But the truth of the matter is that I find no time at the moment to devote to reading, much as I am ashamed to admit it, and that in spite of the fact that I have the most perfect recording of my favorite novel to hand. Sooner or later a lull will develop and I am hoping by then the ability to contact little Marcel's masterpiece again will be possible.

While I think of it, let me pass along something unpleasant about Harnett Kane. When Madame LaSalle was in this room, she asked about Lyle and I remarked he had written all his books on this typewriter and that Harnett Kane had written a couple on it, too. Mrs. LaSalle if Mr. Kane is a welcomed guest at Melrose, and I replied in the negative. Then she and her son told me that the youth who made the photographs for Mr. Kane's two books, - "Plantation Parade", I suppose and some other, had been engaged by Mr. Kane to make the pictures and that now after the lapse of years, the man hadn't received a cent of pay from the author. In view of his notorious tightness, this latest evidence of failure to pay his just debts is no surprise, but so typical of the reputation he seems to enjoy with everyone with whom he comes into contact.

I am sorry to end on this sour note, but I reckon I had better hit off a few other licks on this machine, then fall from a shower into the bed. How pleasant it is going to be when the autumn rains set in and flood out the road runners.....

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Monday, August 15th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Another day without rain but what with the humidity at 99 and threatening clouds off to the South, one almost wishes another drink for Arenbourg might pass this way to make moving about less of a water cavalcade.

I am getting along slowly with my mail but will probably not get caught up with it before the end of the week.

The house remains topsy-turvy, but the living room is finished with one coat of white paint, and my boudoir will have had its second layer put on by tomorrow night, and the clean up to follow in its wake will be a pleasure, what with the promise it holds of the quiet that reigns with some sort of accustomed order.

This morning I rescued a couple huge benches, lost in the bamboo hedges, and had six men toad them to the East and West end of the White Garden. Then, having no sense at all, I decided I had to plant a little around the great sun dial, and so encircled it, about three feet from the base, with a green-green row of Giant's Beard, and beyond that circle some three feet or more perhaps six feet, I planted a broken circle of the same border grass, using four sections, so placed as to leave open paths to the inner circle and the pedestal. Digging Giant's Beard without the aid of dynamite, is a chore, and twice this morning and once this afternoon I found myself just about dehydrated. But I got the stuff done before any pilgrims came, and at sundown I discovered, on taking a second look at the thing that it looked alright, and, what with a couple of licks at Arenbourg before breakfast, and that Mr. Van somebody camping on my trail, - Miss Alberta's neighbor in New Orleans, and the children of Miss Fanny, - Dr. and Mrs. Ambrose Hertzog, for tea, my day turned out not badly balanced.

Mrs. Rand telephoned me from Alexandria this morning to say she is coming up on Tuesday to do a few things at her camp in anticipation of Wednesday's flower show, etc., and asked if she might break bread with us. It will be nice seeing her a few minutes, for at dinner one can always linger a little longer to chat, and although I see her frequently, I seldom if ever get an opportunity to talk much with her, there is always such a crowd attending the Grand train. She remarked that she would like to invite Caroline Dormon for Wednesday, but in view of the difficulties of getting direct word through to Briarwood, she had about given up the idea, and especially as Caroline, according to Mrs. R., seldom

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goes after her mail as far as the Briarwood gate more than once a week. Celeste and I had a friendly tilt this morning over an article about the sun dial, and I guess I shall withhold the thing. Although it was short, I had been interrupted three or four times while knocking it off, and so I needed to have it read back to me before sending it in, and she had asked if she might deliver it for me. And so for want of better, she was delegated to run through the thing for me and she protested that I had written the garden piece was carried out along lines formulated by the Madam, whereas Celeste declared that everyone in the State reading the article would like to know who really contrived the business, and insisted that my name be mentioned. The article didn't suit me much anyway, and so I balked a full stop on putting myself in, since it doesn't matter a fig to begin with, and while it is true that the Madam often did express the hope that I would someday carry out the plan I had outlined to her, still I see no harm in giving her the credit for the thing. And so we pushed and pulled, and I terminated the futile discussion by saying I wanted to alter the thing anyway. Perhaps I shall post the thing by mail, and if so, I shall send you clippings from the Natchitoches and Alexandria papers, but the more I think about it, the more I incline to think it is just as well to suppress all references to the sun dial in any newspaper, for to begin with, I certainly don't want to stimulate the pilgrimage trade any, and somebody or other reading about the thing might find the mere notice sufficient excuse to put foot in the big road.

After Wednesday's dedication ceremonies and dinner at the Rand Camp, I shall stop by the store on my return and tell the clerk I will see no more pilgrims except by appointment. I am determined to spend the major part of the next two weeks at Arenbourg where no one every finds me and I can devote myself to a little gardening without perpetual interruptions. Usually I am on pretty intimate terms both with our young trees and plants, not to mention the weeds, and their friendship is too important to me to let it be frittered away by a flock of restless road runners.

I am not quite sure, in looking back toward this morning's dawn, - what with the place cluttered up with 4 painters in the house, six gardeners outside the house, pilgrims and Henrys all limped together, how I did find time to listen for a few moments to my colored grapevine which was functioning fairly well, especially for blue Monday, and word came through that one of my Little River friends has a young-ish skunk for me which will be delivered sometime during the week. At the moment I so really need one, but after Wednesday I shall be entranced to have a new pet to go with my old ones, and it is nice to learn my friends in the moss draped bayous haven't completely forgotten me and my whims. I hope he turns out to be an all black one, but even though he turns out to be half black and half white, he ought to be in perfect harmony with this old mulatto setting.. And so to Tender Leaf and to bed....

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Tuesday, August, 16th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Another day, and it is a little past ten before I get around to take Underwood in hand for our nightly little chat.

I guess the heat has been more intense today than yesterday, but somehow I haven't minded it so much, and the electric storm I see flashing off in the North East suggests something by way of coolness may be in the offing, although it will probably turn out more of a promise than a performance.

It was 11 this morning before Mrs. Rand arrived. She brought me a splendid rope for the punks, an amazing magenta pink, and withal so niggery that nothing could have been half so suitable. She and Will Rogers contrived some sort of support for the thing along the ceiling, so that the thing runs from the punks which is about in the middle of the gallery to a point slap opposite the door by which I sit, - to the left in the Suydam Yucca. There it descends from the ceiling to a point about three feet from the floor, which is just perfect in height for the puller of the chord, for whom a hand wrought old corn husk bottom chair has been provided. Of course we all had to try the thing out, taking turns as to which should pull the chord and which should get the breeze directly under the punks. And now all we need is a party, and that will unravel in the morning along about 10.

The painters finished the inside of the house and the gallery and a second coat on the sun dial this morning, and as pressing plantation business took them all away during the afternoon, I shall let the projecting rooms at each end of the gallery, - that is, their sides facing the White Garden ewscape the paint pots until a little later, for I am sick and tired of all the hubbub, and shall be glad to be done with three or four painters milling around when I have so many other things I want to be doing. I must also confess that along the front of each projecting room on the White Garden side the butterfly lilies are just coming into bloom, and since one can eat one's cake and have it, too, - on rare occasions, I shall enjoy the realization that they are momentarily secure and will not be trodden into extinction by the painters until after Jack Frost has leveled the lilies.

I need scarcely speak of all the chores incumbent upon the occupant of any house or apartment in the wake of painters, and this place was no exception, and I pushed and hauled stuff around like mad

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most of the afternoon, as soon as Mrs. Rand had departed right after dinner. She had to go to attend to some things at her camp and then hurry back to Alexandria where she half expected to find Miss Myra waiting for her on her arrival. I hope she realizes her expectations, for that will mean Miss Myra will be here tomorrow, and it will be pleasant to see here again after all these years.

From the enclosure you will notice two or three things, including the evidence that November news has finally reached Charles. I must dash off a little line to him tonight to assist him in the problem of his tenant houses. I think I have a simple solution that will be satisfactory to him and the tenants, too, and immediate receipt of such a thought may be of particular service to him at the present time.

Mr. Van somebody, the New Orleans dealer, finally headed out for home this morning. He took a couple of Clemence's things with him. I think he might be an interesting man, but I had little opportunity to get acquainted with him. The ladies next door were delighted with him, and so forgave him to disregarding their request not to pop in on a week end. Saturday evening to Tuesday morning sounds sort of week-end-ish to me, but that is but a detail. Last night just as I was stepping out of my front gate, clad only in slippers and a summery bathroom, bend on getting some ice at the big house for my Tender Leaf, I bumped into Mr. Van at my gate, heading here for a chat. I had not the slightest intention of entertaining him at such an hour, although I did feel a little sorry for him, for I reckon he must have been a little bored. But I felt a lie was in order and so I swore I was going to the big house to see about disconnecting an attic fan, and so persuaded him to walk back with me. Once in the house, of course, it was easy enough to withdraw, which I did within about five minutes, and how poor Mr. Van made out the balance of the night I wouldn't know. Or care.....

I smiled to myself this morning when I discovered a slight of hand trick that the pushers of the lawn mowers had put over in the White Garden yesterday afternoon where three or four of them had their machines whirling like mad for hours. I had told them to cut the grass, in anticipation of tomorrow's festivities, and assumed I didn't need to check up on them, and particularly as the painters and I were all scuffling around on the gallery giving on the lawn, where the industry was obvious to intense and everlasting. I was positive they were doing a great piece of haying, since they were taking the whole afternoon to do it, but I didn't care, and let them go ahead. Picture my astonishment this morning, when I discovered that while the lawn mowers had actually been buzzing along at a mile a minute clip, the combined force had apparently selected a strip perhaps 3 feet wide, and the one or the other or the third or the fourth, at any old angle in relation to the others, and the machines had been pushed all afternoon over the same three foot strips, so that the place looks like a mare's nest. "I declare, those niggers are sights..!"

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Wednesday, August 17th, 1949.

Memorandum: Another hot, humid day, but a gentle breeze stirring enough to keep things pleasant.

I got in a couple of hours work at Arenbourg before big day was upon us, and then followed a folk of the little odds and ends that have to be attended to following the final departure of painters and the advent of guests.

Dr. and Mrs. Rand, together with their guests, including Miss Myra Smith, newspaper people and a photographer arrived about 10:30. We altered the usual tour a little by beginning with the big house, and thence to the weaving house, the bindery, the studio, the African House, where, on recommendation, Clemence had set up her easel and was painting madly, and thence on to Yucca.

At dawn I had covered the dial with a huge sheet so the President of the Town and Country Gardeners, Mrs. Windsor Thomas, might do the unveiling. The breeze was gentle but did all sorts of interesting things to the veil. The reporters were jotting down notes constantly and flash-light bulbs were flashing every which way. Ice Coca Cola refreshed the guests on the back gallery giving on the white garden, and once I noticed movies being ground out while I was sitting pulling the elegant pink punka rope to the delectation of those who chanced to be under the old fan.

It was much after noon when we quitted Yucca and journeyed over to the Rand Camp for dinner, spread under the cedars out of doors, and withal delightfully shaded, and the gentle breeze still holding.

The food, of course, was wonderful, with a flock of sandwiches of heavenly content, and much salades and Canadian bacon and fried chickens and deserts out of this world, not to mention iced drinks that were marvelous. While thus dining in the open, I got an opportunity to chat with several people I hadn't met before, and afterward, while the Club was holding its meeting inside the camp, Miss Myra and I sat under the trees and tried to catch up a little on conversation.

She told me Miss Szida Wells, a noisey but historically minded character had died. - I take it a while back. And she said one would never recognize Windy Hill Manor, what with all the mass of new roads cut through and through the place, while Miss Maude in the hospital, is having the time of her life with nurses in constant attendance, and the lady a little bit vague at times. She telephoned a dress shop last week to send over a dozen frocks so that she might make a selection of one, and ended up by taking the whole batch, although she will probably never leave her bed.

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She said Mary Lambdin has just undergone a very serious operation but has come through successfully, thank Heavens, and is slated to return from the hospital to Mistletoe within a day or two.

In regards to Miss Jeanne and Oakland, she said Miss Jean died one day, was buried the next morning, and the house, - Oakland, - was sold the following evening. For a one horse town, Natchez certainly hits quite a speed on occasion, doesn't it. It seems that Oakland was sold "as is", with every scrap of paper, every family portrait, every book, every stick of elegant Sheraton furniture, - including even Miss Jeanne's wearing apparel. I know the people indirectly who bought the place, and although possessed of money, I doubt if they could tell one minor portrait from another, and would know or care less if any one identified them. I am hoping they will maintain the place intact, but I shudder to think how thin s will go when they start "cleaning up".

Miss Myra told me quite frankly that the atmosphere of Natchez is changing ever so rapidly and for the worse, and she finds it depressing. At last it has got itself into the main stream of contemporary life and all its attendant problems of crime and chicanery. I suppose in most peoples lives a change of civilization occurs, but the Natchez brand, having projected its ante bellum flavor so far into the 20th century seems to me unique in having held out so long.

When I got back home, I found a note from one of the feature writers, asking if I would be receiving the press on Monday next, with a view to using some of the photographs taken today for a feature story in the Magazine Section of the Times Picayune or the Shreveport Times. Since the photographs have been taken, I suppose they are likely to appear anyway, and the Henrys will probably like the publicity, but I am quite sure I should welcome the attendant spurt in pilgrims that might result. I shall decide the matter on the morrow.

Swinging back to Miss Myra, you will be interested in this straw in the wind. She told me her friend, Miss Gurd, always rabidly anti-Roosevelt, has never forgiven F. D. R. for his economic theories, but in view of various circumstances, capped by Cardinal Spellman's letter, she, Miss Gurd, has become, after a right about face, a most fervent supporter of Mrs. Roosevelt. From such little signs coming to hand, I come to the conclusion the Cardinal with quite the opposite intent, has rendered the First Lady a service in popular esteem that years of slow popular trends wouldn't have achieved. Perhaps we all ought to send a vote of thanks to the big boy of St. Patricks.

Well, so things turn, and I had better knock off a few letters before I turn to Tender Leaf. I think I shall take time out to see Dr. Knipmayer on the morrow, but turn a cold shoulder on everyone else except our little horticultural friends further up the Joyeous Coast....

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Thursday, August 18th, 1949.

Memorandum:

A lovely day, cloudless but not too hot, and only two or three pilgrims, aside from Dr. Knipmayer who isn't a pilgrim and James Cunningham whom I shall not designate.

The hubbub of additions and re-doing things across the fence goes on merrily, with Madam Regard and Celeste spending their days at the big house. But I am wondering how soon they will be coming over to Yucca, what with things busting out at the seams in the big house, so to speak, for this morning a half dozen men began tearing up the floors in one bathroom, and threatening to do the same in a second while others were tearing off a roof on one of the minor additions, with a racket generally upsetting the quiet of ye olde plantation.

Pat leaves tonight for Mexico City, traveling with some of his law school friends by car. I believe, via Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio and so on to Mexico City for at least a couple of weeks. It sounds like a nice trip and I am enchanted he can make it since he apparently enjoys traveling.

Celeste tells me she spends tomorrow in town, - hair do and what not, no doubt, and on Saturday heads out early for some wedding in South Louisiana where she remains until Monday, I believe, for another. I am hoping we have a quiet week end hereabouts without too many de la Vallieres or Montespons hiding about in the bushes. Someone today mentioned an interesting issue of Holliday, I gather perhaps the last one, having to do with the Hudson River valley. I have no doubt you have already seen this issue, but thought I would mention it just in case circumstances had prevented you from catching up with it as yet. The pictures of Hyde Park, they say, are especially lovely.

From the enclosure, I take it Sunday evening will have its quota of visitors other than pilgrims. I am beginning to stir up some kind of hours when Yucca and I close down for an entire day. As I have always concentrated on Arenbourg early in the day, pilgrims never bother me on that score, but once in a while I should like a little time to myself when I would be guaranteed a half day of quiet. As Saturdays and Sundays are probably the heaviest days for traffic about the bushes, I had better make it some week day, I guess.

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The vacationist, Postell, dropped in for a few minutes this afternoon, just to say Howdy and to thank me for a tour I gave his wife and mother the other day. He said that as a friend, he wanted to tell me something I might not know, being the object of the talk. According to his impression, I have during the past twelfth month become a mythical or legendary figure in the Cane River county, and he wasn't sure which was the proper word. He says that on the Joyeous Coast and in town and further afield beyond the Parish, people, on learning if he is from New Orleans, ask him if he has ever heard of me, and when he admits he has, some of them say they have glimpsed me once or twice while others confess they never have tracked me down, but it is their understanding that whatever has been cooking at Melrose during the past few years, I am the one to have a finger in the pie. He says that on learning he is acquainted with me, several people have asked him if he could possibly arrange to take them for a look, or failing that, if I might be induced by him to attend some party or tea where they could meet me, whereupon both he and I rolled on the floor. I gather from what he says, and he seems to be something of the same opinion, that formerly Lyle and the Madam were two distinct personalities in the public mind, but withal somewhat shadowy figures, as neither one went out much, except when headed for more remote destinations such as Natchez or New Orleans or some such, but now that both of them are gone, the idea seems to have been established in the region that I have united their two distinctly different interests into a single individual and am continuing to keep myself as remote as a Llasha Llama. Of course what gets everybody down is the fact that I don't accept invitations to frolic after frolic, and that fact alone is sufficient to floor all of them, since they are thereby convinced that there must be something strange, mighty strange, about anyone who refused to grab at every passing invitation, which, although they don't realize it probably, makes some of them more determined than ever to break in on the placid exterior and get in behind the endless screens of bamboo and bushes.

Often, I must confess, I feel sorry for some poor bag or other who, having succeeded in making the front gate, offers a dinner or supper as a matter of courtesy, and obviously on the assumption that the invitation will be accepted. And then, when the invitation is declined, the surprise and puzzled expression in face of note is pitiful. But I should feel more sorry for myself if I ever started accepting, and so I just let them, and Celeste, ponder and never solve the riddle as to how anyone can turn down invitations such as these, convinced, in the end, that my case is just as hopeless as ever was Lyle's or the Madam's....

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Friday, August 19th, 1949.

Memorandum:

I was enchanted this morning when the postman handed me your letter, which I have started to read but have been forced to put off temporarily, but hope to resume before the night advances too far.

Celeste tore the enclosed clipping from the Alexandria Town Talk this morning, messing it up a bit, I believe, but perhaps you can make it out. She ran through it quickly with me, and I roared to myself at its set up, - I, who a few days back was contending with Celeste about my name not appearing in the article I wrote, and ultimately withheld because I didn't want my name mentioned, - when now this thing comes to hand

The Holloman bag, or however one spells it is the one I shall dictate an article to for the Times Picayune when she, if she does, drives up from Alexandria with a photographer.

I shall have to keep in mind that the Times Picayune and the Shreveport Times, the first through dumbness, the second through race prejudice, carries little or nothing about people of color, and preparing anything about an old mulatto plantation for such a press without mentioning color is a little difficult.

interruption

And during the interim, I have finished your letter. How glad I am to learn that you are going to get an outing in the country. I feel certain the change will do wonderful things for you, and although I am not sure that the country provides any more rest than the city, still the country air and quiet, and I hope a maximum of sleep and relaxation will accomplish wonders.

As for the proposed more extended jaunt Southward beyond the Gulf, I can readily guess some of the considerations involved, aside from your own wishes. I need scarcely express my sympathy for you on that score, and you will forgive me if I stick out my neck with an observation not asked for, - to wit, that under no circumstances would I be jockeyed into going in the role of dragon and duenna. That the child might anticipate such a trip is understandable, and yet I have a feeling your own claims

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to taking time out on your own account is equally important. But in the long run, if you should feel that the wish of another is more important than your own in making a journey Southward, then may I have the effrontery to observe that while your presence in hoping South of the Gulf might be a necessity for the realization of another to make a similar hop, there are others this side of the Gulf who would be equally delighted if the shorter trip might somehow be contrived. But in such matters, of course I realize there are a hundred and one considerations that only one immediately involved in the business can comprehend, and so, which ever way is finally decided upon, you know I shall heartily approve because your solution, whatever it be, will be the wisest in view of all the circumstances, and if the lesser hop must be delayed for a while later, you will always know that the red carpet will be just as ready to be kicked out then as at any other time. I fully appreciate, I think, your preference in this matter, and it is the wish that counts, for after the hum-drum "must" things are evaded or overcome, then the wishing for the other will beget a realization of the same.

How characteristically thoughtful of you to think of me, as between the 19th and 28th while you are away, in suggesting that I take time out and forego our nightly chats. I quake a little at the thought of the stuff that may confront you at 908 on your return if I insist on maintaining the daily pleasure that is so much the best part of my daily routine. With the exception of the enclosure which I have already mentioned, I shall try to keep such items down to a minimum, and shall forward for the most part the usual enclosures under separate cover, marked with a couple of parallel lines for your convenience, so you will know they are of secondary pressure in the demands on your time.

A case in point is a letter from the Rhine which came to hand in today's post. I shall respond to the same tonight, enclosing the response with the letter from the lady in question, so that, if you care to, you may read both, being so kind as to include the response with one of your own when writing some time, or mailing it directly under separate envelope, as circumstances seem to warrant. I think you will agree the picture she presents of her town is most informative and delightfully balanced, and I marvel and her continued use of English with such fluency after so many years of having probably heard so little.

You ask about the Guest Book at Melrose and the African House. Melrose had one, the same single one, which covered a stretch of years, with but a very select few entering their names in it. The one I am keeping at the African House holds the signatures of everyone I can get to, although about a third of the people's names are omitted, I guess, since it so frequently happens that one group of people must necessarily be hurried along to make room for another which is waiting, and so the Guest Book is skipped, but even so, it is spreading over pages fast, and I hope to work out a system where bye everyone shall be entered shortly. It will be fun turning through before long, I think.....

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Sunday, August 21st, 1949.

Memorandum: The first hint of autumn crept in just before dawn this morning. Naturally, my thoughts turned instinctively toward the Catskills, wondering if you, too, were sleeping under a blanket and if outside, the leaves were beginning to rustle and the way leaves will when summer is almost finished and a more colorful turn of the year rides in on the morning star.

And today has been marvelous, all blue and gold accompanied by a delightfully cool breeze. To stave off being swamped by the way we were last week end, we locked the front gate with padlock and chain, and although many a car was seen to come to a full stop, they all finally went on their way, all except three, some friends of Raynie, the boys from Shreveport to see me, and just before dusk Miss Ette Levy, her Aunt Lottie and her brother, Joe, their first visit in a year, and I was glad to see all of them.

Saturday was something of a shambles, what with half of Alexandria heading in this direction, following the notice in Town Talk about Wednesday's festivities. But I grabbed off time, both in the morning and afternoon, to work at Arenbourg where the Johnson Grass on the terrace has definitely won the present battle, until I can get the ploughs turning in that direction again. I went back again this morning to gather some elegant white crinums for the gallery giving on the White Garden. Their stems were at least three feet in height and their fragrance inordinately heavy. With yellow cannas in the living room and butterfly lilies in the boudoir, the place looked ever so gay.

Celeste and Madam Regard returned from their frolic in South Louisiana at first dark this evening. I chatted with them long enough to cover the food, clothes and people,--all of which, it would seem, were just too, too divine. They attend another wedding tomorrow morning in Natchitoches, and so they play out their days. Nero's fiddle and Marie Antoinette's deck of cards seem like such familiar objects somehow.

It is pleasant to report that some, but not all, of the

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marital problems disturbing local hearthstones have been settled. Little King has solved his and Elam his. Clyde Claude Emmett Davis succeeded in patching up his, winning a signal victory, it appears, for in order to make him happy, - and so to return home, his wife sold a cow, buying with the money an old worn out Ford which Clyde Claude Emmett Davis relishes thoroughly and already has just about run the wheels off the thing.

Beau Mack hasn't fared so well, for his wife has found herself a good job in Shreveport where her mother lives. I failed to get a haircut this week end because Beau had to go and see if he couldn't entice the wife and children back to Melrose with him. Everyone seems to think he will not succeed.

Something struck a snag on Little River, too, and the Dark Duke has been staying on Cane River for the past week. With the advent of the first herald of autumn, however, I look for much knitting up of ravelled sleeves before another week has past. The first cotton bolls are beginning to open, and in many quarters the common economic demands will catch up loose ties that earlier in the season might have frayed out completely.

One night this past week, I stumbled over the Bob Trout "Who Said That" program, but I was so sleepy I failed to recall those participating in the broadcast, and later couldn't remember which night I had heard it. It could have been a re-broadcast, but I think not. Should you run across any announcement regarding the day and hour, I should be glad to be set straight on the matter, for I like the program.

I am reminded of Will Percy's remark about who counts in the South by the first reactions to the "old Yucca sun dial", for only the negro and the superior white person seem to be impressed by it. On Saturday afternoon five of the boys came to sit and look at it for a while, Ezra, Murrell, Little King, Peter and the Dark Duke. As a gesture of something or other, the Dark Duke brought a pint of port, which was just enough to whet everyone's appetite. And after disposing of the contents of the bottle, the Dark Duke in a philosophic mood observed:

"You know, on the plantation there ain't much difference between Sunday mornin' and Monday mornin' except that on Sunday mornin' all of us has got a hang over while on Monday mornin' all us-es got's a hang further over."....

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Monday, August 22nd, 1949.

Memorandum: How nice to receive your two letters in this morning's post. Somehow I had thought of you as having already done a Rip Van Winkle, lost in a Catskill dream land and beyond the reaches of communication with the outside world. But on re-considering the date marks I realized these letters had been posted before it was time for you to go "off the record".

I appreciate the clipping for I had not seen an obituary of Margaret Mitchell and my radio listening of late has been so sketchy that I had heard but a brief line in regular news broadcasts concerning her accident, prior to her death.

And thanks for telling me about the Ethel Barrymore tribute, which I also missed. It sounded grand and her acknowledgement must have been ever so moving. Her voice has such a marvelous quality on the stage, I suppose it embraces much of the same feelings in depth, and on such an occasion, when traveling over the air. I am so glad you saw her in the play you mentioned which I never have seen. The last time I saw her she was appearing at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre in a Spanish play whose name eludes me, - "Child of God" or something like that, and her effectiveness, I guess, is proven by the fact that I can't remember so much about the play as the way she played it, for Miss Barrymore, like Alexander Scourby, might read a telephone directory and do the thing with such felicity that the mere sound of the voice would be sufficient, regardless of the content of the material on which concentration for the moment was being expended.

And I had heard nothing about Death and the Wells family in Switzerland. My Mr. Brew read the sentence in such a way that I understood Mrs. Wells was the one who died and so, on his departure, I tucked the letter into my armoire until the morrow, just to check on the point. Surely, if Mrs. Wells is the one, the twist of Fate would be exceptional, what with Mr. Wells having been in such delicate health since his dreadful experience last Christmas time.

As regards the books mentioned by Mrs. Brandon, may I congratulate you on the excellence of your memory regarding the same. The book you mention as having been included in the Melrose collection, I am sure you are quite right. I shall attempt to track it down, along with a couple of other ones which I should like to reserve on their own holding shelf. Perhaps you will eventually run across the other in 4th Avenue on one

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of your excursions in that most delightful of all vacation spots.

The weather remains astonishingly cool for this region in August. Last night the thermometer touched a low 60, and although it climbed to 88 this afternoon, the radio says it will skid downward again tonight. More daring cotton bowls are already beginning to explode and our colored friends, after a whole season of scurrying for shade, have now reversed the process and are moving out into the sunshine in early morning for the warmth of the sunshine.

It has been a fairly busy day but altogether pleasant.

Mrs. Coombs dropped by the store to speak with J. H. on business this noon and he insisted she remain and dine with us. She told us that she and her husband were driving home rather late the other night when they heard a scream and Dr. Coombs, fearing he had struck a pedestrian in the shadowy street without realizing it, slammed on his breaks, nearly throwing himself and his wife through the windshield. Immediately afterward another scream tore through the midnight air, and in looking in the direction from whence it came, they discovered they were immediately in front of Dr. McCook's house, and the ear splitting sounds were issuing from the McCook living room where a group of assembled guests were being treated to an aria by Madam McCook, no less. And so it was that the air about the car suddenly became blue with denunciations by the driver of the Coombs car, and the occupants, relieved of their terror, proceeded homeward.

Mrs. Holloman of the Alexandria Town Talk, came after dinner, and I spent the major part of the afternoon dictating to her in preparing an article, which will possibly appear in the Times Picayune Magazine section. She is good to work with, and fortunately knows nothing about the subject, which, in going back over the rough draft, will give us an opportunity to get a layman's reaction to a subject that inclines to be difficult to handle when one is too steeped in it. The whole article will be devoted to Pecanes, I think, which ought to make it easily palatable to the Picayune editor, what with pecane season being upon us, or just in the offing, and pecanes themselves a Louisiana crop of considerable economic interest. Mrs. Holloman will return on Wednesday with Mrs. Rand, and we shall try to finish the dictation and run through the stuff to see what we can make of it.

If the pecane thing seems to take on satisfactory shape, I may, in the absence of little Miss Ramsey, let Mrs. Holloman "carry the ball" for some other Cane River stuff.

Bulb planting at Arenbourg and wrestling with pilgrims rounded out the day, and now for sleep to fix the seal....

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Tuesday, August 23rd, 1949.

Memorandum:

How nice to be surprised again by the postman this morning who handed me your elegant letter, penned just before taking off for the great open spaces where, at this moment I trust, you are really relaxing mightily, getting gobs of ozone, and generally doing nothing.

And thanks for the clipping about the Goat Castle auction. I just learned at supper tonight that Don Worsley had told Celeste in town that he was planning to attend. I am glad he, and the lady doctor have given up as a bad job any attempts and all to catch me up in the go-cart and whisk me away to the Bluff City. Aside from wanting to stay put, in spite of my affection for them, I don't want to make any jaunts to Natchez with either the Worsleys or the Henrys, for such a trip would mean I would either deny myself the pleasure of seeing my Natchez friends entirely or would have to make a three-some of any contacts which, after all these years, would be entirely unsatisfactory so far as I might be concerned.

But speaking of Natchez recalls into what a dither Dr. Postell put me last Saturday when he passed this way. Quite casually, - for he is not interested in such subjects, he mentioned a slave matter that set me coo-coo. He was speaking of some property transfers, "situated at the back of the Chancery Court room, down low there where that old dust covered book, - Slave Trials in Adams County Court, along with all those other books are resting, - forgotten".

I did not know before that there was a special book devoted to the trials of slaves and naturally am dying to know something about it. But the best I can do is to keep mum, I guess, for Mrs. Moore doesn't seem to want to communicate with Melrose any more, and even if I did tell her about it and ask for particulars, she would undoubtedly instantly toss it into the hands of some passing Barnett Kane, only to reproach herself later for not having restrained herself.

But can you imagine how much pleasure such a volume would afford some people, should it come to hand, and can't you imagine how entertaining the thing might be if properly annotated. What a vista of ante bellum doings in the Natchez country, and all bound between two stiff boards. Brother, would I like to explore that item.

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The weather remains marvelous, sunny and cool, with a pre-Indian summer haze that, for all I know, may be tintured with smoke from some forest fire, although after all the dews and damps of June and July, I can't imagine much is smoldering in this region.

With another 60 degree thermometer reading last night, it was just right at dawn to undertake a few minor slaps at gardening on the terrace at Arenbourg, and on my return I brought with me some more heavily scented white lilies which I added to Sunday's bouquet on the back gallery. As daylight faded into dark tonight, I sat for a while under the gallery punka watching the great sun dial fade gradually into the firefly spangled bamboo beyond when to my great delight first one, then a second and then a third humming bird paid leisurely visits to the Arenbourg lilies in the vase beside me. They didn't seem to mind my presence and they remained busy at their lily business when I got up. As quickly as possible I filled another bottle with honey, and suspended it from the punka, just above the lilies. Within a few minutes the little visitors had detected this new source of food supply and immediately began an assault, which was funny enough at the beginning, since the bottle was slowly turning around and around on its string, and the first thing I knew, we were having a humming bird merry-go-round, with nobody getting anywhere in particular until I suspended a 2 inch board behind the bottle to slow it up a bit, whereupon the birds, never standing more than 3 feet away, closed in again, and on departing, all of them, I'm sure, felt they had struck the jack pot.

As a child I used to see plenty of humming birds, but somehow I have always associated them with brilliant sunshine but probably I was too busy at other things when twilight settled down to notice them and their apparent inclination, - in these climes, at least, to undertake extensive operations along about first dark.

Madam Rand brought three guests with her to the camp early this morning, dropping me a message by dusky messenger to break bread with them at noon, if too busy, to pass by for a late supper tonight, for they are remaining until the morrow. I declined the luncheon invitation and held out but faint hope for the late snack. After all, what with getting the humming birds to bed, not to mention my grapevine reporting that the Dark Duke wants to consult with me about the possibility of patching up his rift with his pregnant wife, which means he merely wants me to confirm his impulse to return to her, plus the fact that I may have an opportunity to spend half a day at solid dictation on the pecane situation, I guess I shall let the late snack at the Rand camp move along without me. And long since, Hope, has sleep caught up with you and quatrains of Omar Khayyam echoed in your dreams....

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3776

Wednesday, August 24th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The weather continues marvelous. May as much be said for the Catskills.

And the nights are so cool, sleeping somehow takes on an added luxury.

I didn't go to the Rands last night, sleep seemed so much more inviting than food.

And today there has been too much company, but I managed to get in a few licks at dawdling up Arenbourg way.

From town this morning Miss Kate telephoned to say she was coming out to spend the day. Before she had arrived some of Celeste's kin folk had passed this way, and after Miss Kate arrived, Ora Williams and Mrs. Coombs dropped in. Miss Coombs sought information about the present residence of the family of Boy Balthazar, one of whose daughters, it would seem, is entitled to welfare assistance. A year ago the girl divorced her husband, and then, three months later, conceived a child by the man. And so now, an unwed but expectant mother, she needs assistance. It all sounds so confusing, --biological impulses entangled with dates and decrees on the Court calendar.

And Ora remained for the balance of the day, and what with Miss Kate here, too, everyone secretly was reminded, I am sure, of the Madam's old adage: "Only two can talk".

But it was good to have news first hand from Penland where everything seems to be moving along smoothly this season. Miss Lucy sent word that shortly she was sending a stick of dynamite down this way to blast me out of Melrose, on the promise, - from Ora and R. B., - that if that medium proved effective, they would cart me to Penland for a season, which seems to be Madam Morgan's intention. Again to quote the Madam: "I ain't goin' nowhere".

And then in the midst of the Williams-Perkins countra-danse, Dr. and Mrs. Oberdyke arrived, unannounced. They are staying in Natchitoches for a few days to do some photographic work and to dig into the records a bit. They also wanted to take pictures of Yucca on the garden side. They went away until the light should be most advantageous, and returned when we were at supper, asking

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when I would see them on Thursday or Friday. I mentioned 9:15 on Thursday, thus giving me an opportunity to get in some hoeing at Arenbourg before the historical section opened up. They say their book on North Louisiana plantation homes will not be brought out by L. S. U. Press until the autumn of 1950.

I never did see the Rands.

Miss Kate spoke of the history book on Louisiana by Dr. McGintey, or whatever is the name of the new President of the College. She says it is a good book. She says the President and his wife have been making inquiries about the possibility of getting an invitation to Melrose. Miss Kate passed along word that she thought it might be arranged. I'll invite him and his wife to make a round as soon as the season advances a little and the hurly-burly, if ever, slackens its pace.

The painters are still going strong at J. H.'s house where things remain in an uproar of confusion, with most of the furniture transported into the dining room and library of Melrose. I sent over a pair of wall brackets, - black ones, and another set, the latter with shelf attached, and had them, the brackets, and it, the shelf, painted white. My urge to get my onblong glass fish bowl going, on one side of the window here by my desk, and the bird board on the opposite side of the window well supplied before the frosts come, - the two seem to spell me to immediate action although frosts can't possibly arrive before November. I wonder what next I shall think up between pilgrims.

I intended remarking upon the advertisement of the Louisiana film, as described in the advertisement attached to your recent letter. There have been several films carrying a Louisiana name during the past couple of years, and I can't remember if this is the very excellent one I have heard mentioned. It seems to me the one I have heard praised highly was made under the auspices of some oil company or group of oil companies, but its precise title seems to have faded from my memory, if, indeed, I ever distinguished it from the others.

As Chairman of the Board of the Rural Electrification Administration's unit in this area, J. H. has of late had many people passing this way, asking for the job of General Manager. Yesterday one was heard, having run down from Washington to apply. He says he is acquainted with General Vaughn and had luncheon with him a week or so ago. He thinks he is fine. That let the applicant out, so far as J. H. was concerned. Said applicant somehow gave the impression that General Vaughn is "taking the rap" for "higher ups", and who in the world could be a "higher up" in the "deep freeze" business but Mr. Big himself. I hope the word Truman never comes to mean anything like the word Harding.....

3778

Thursday, August 25th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The weather remains marvelous, with just a suggestion of haze that always appears about this time of year when the West Indian cauldron starts bubbling. I notice by the radio that another twister is swirling somewhere off Florida, and this year, if this one heads in toward the Gulf, little Miss Alberta will for once be home to close her windows.

I recall the remarks of the author of that book about the voyages of Columbus, - how fortunate the explorer was in arriving in that storm center of the Western Hemisphere in October, just after the annual hurricanes had blown themselves out.

There was a heavy dew at Arenbourg early this morning when I went to cut out wide spaces in the Johnson Grass around the little live oaks so the mower, plough and disks on Saturday morning will not get tangled up in the wrong greenery.

The Oberdykes or Overdykes came at the appointed hour this morning and remained for lunch. I was in the midst of a short story when they arrived, and so lied to them and told them I was expecting guests at 1, so that they would get going after coffee and so give me an opportunity to try to remember where I left off before pilgrims might blow in.

Peter, Ezra and Clyde Claude Emmett Davis were busy all day, dusting off the gin and trying out the engines in anticipation of gathering of what there is by way of lint in the fields this year. At supper tonight, J. H. remarked that from a inspection tour he had made during the afternoon of the fields in this neighborhood, there wouldn't be much difficulty in getting everything picked in a jiffy.

By a curious twist of Fate, about the only person making a crop on Melrose who seems to have a fair promise of a generous yield is Beau Mack who, of all people concerned in domestic scuffles during the past month, is the only one who hasn't patched up his difficulties, and so will not a wife of children to help pick. His trip to Shreveport last week end yielded him nothing and today he had a letter from his wife saying she and the children definitely were not coming home.

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From the enclosure, I take it Mrs. Ferriday Byrnes and Mrs. Graham would like to make a round at Melrose. I should be delighted to see Roane and Althea but their time limit is out of whack, what with the big house with its bath room floors up, and the rest of the place being occupied by J. H. Celeste and Madam Regard while their house is in confusion. It appears the General and his wife and Pat will be here by the Labor Day week end, and after that things ought to begin straightening out, but surely not much before the middle of the month. I guess it will therefore be my painful duty to say NO, - at least for this go-round. From what Roane has to say about Alice's forth coming book, perhaps Alice will need thick bushes and tall bamboo to hide behind almost any time after February, so perhaps I can hold out that season as a possibility.

I must admit I should be glad to to a bit of rocking on the galleries at Laurel Hill, Mistletoe and Devereux, pondering on the past and comparing contemporary impressions of the present, but otherwise I seem to feel no impulse pulling me in that direction, except at some fortunate time when I may share a few fading glimpses of the place with you, and turning through the pages of that tome, - Slave Trials.

I certainly hope I can somehow crawl out of going to Natchez with the General and his wife, with a view to spending a week end with Roane. In the first place, can you imagine the wail from several quarters when the Natchez Democrat came out the next Monday, indicting I had been in town, - and seen none of my old friends. An I certainly see not point in contacting people like Mary Rhodes, for example, under such a set up, and there would certainly be no point in crashing in on Dr. Butler for a half hour of small talk. Well, Lord.....

And such considerations impell me to bestir myself to send a note to Rudolph that Labor Day is all filled up, and perhaps a flea in the ear of two or three Shreveport people might be in order.

It's a ridiculous thing, but I miss my reading machine, although Heaven knows I certainly wouldn't have any time to operate the thing during these hurly-burly times. Still, it is perhaps like the beloved books on one's shelves, constant reminders of the presence of friends, even though one scarcely gets around to have a nodding acquaintance with them. Still, the fact that they are there somehow means much.

As soon as you are home again and things get unwrinkled a little, I shall send along the little story mentioned above. It's temporary title is "The Name is Emma", and you can see if you like it and if something ought to be done about it. Onay, of course, it will be but a rough draft.....

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Friday, August 26th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The marvelous weather continues, - and so does the merry-go-round.

Mrs. Holloman came this afternoon to give a once over to our notes and to take dictation. She brought a photographer with her and his flashlight contraption wouldn't function.

A group from Tulsa arrived. A young man wanted to do some sketching. His name was John Rice or Jack Reese, or some such. He was good. He told me he with his party were on their way home from New Orleans. He said he had attended the Arts and Crafts show and that undoubtedly the two Cane River primitives were the best thing among hundreds on display. He didn't ask to see Clemence, and naturally I had not time to take him.

We resumed dictation. Dr. Postell came to say Goodbye as he was leaving for home and the opening of the L. S. U. Medical Library in the Crescent city. He lingered. I fidgeted. I set the photographer to taking some stuff not requiring a flashlight.

I saw Celeste and Madam Regard in the garden, heading toward their car, bent on a frolic somewhere or other. Celeste was in a lather. She said this place is getting more like a graveyard every day, and less and less like a plantation home. On coming in, the artist had inquired at the big house if he might make some sketches. She was just getting ready to dress to go out. Melrose is so big for her. She will be so much happier when she gets back across the fence I took Mrs. Holloman and the photographer to St. Augustin's. The sun was too low for pictures. Grandpere's tomb has been refurbished. The lovely old red bricks are now completely concealed by a fine new coat of cement. We read the epitaph again, - born 1760, died 1856. Again it occurs to me he was not the original lullatto grantee, but the son or possibly grandson of the original grantee. After all, the Natchitoches post was established five or six years prior to the death of Louis XIV who died in September 1715, if memory serves. By the 1740's or 1750's, the mulatto children born at the Fort at Natchitoches would have reached maturity, and long since had the ships provisioning the Fort

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been discharging their cargoes at the post, and re-loading with barrel staves and timber, to be taken back with them as far as the West Indies, where the barrel staves would be unloaded to provide containers for the sugar-molasses the islands were then sending to Europe, taken, undoubtedly, by the same boats.

I take Melrose, - Yucca, - was built in the 1740's or 1750's, the habitation of the mulatto offspring of the early soldiery. The plantations on la Cote Joyeuse were granted by Louis XV in the 1760's, just before the end of Mme. de Pompadour's war ended by handing this region to Spain. The mulatto plantations in the Yucca area it is generally understood ante dated the white grants by some scores of years. And so, if one will but return, an occasional trip to the graveyard does one no harm. And it is certainly good, if one likes speculation to start perking. And I do.

We noted the epitaph of Grandpere's wife, Maria Agnes, etc., etc., who died at 70 in 1830. It seems most unlikely she should have purchased the coffee table gracing my living room after she was 50. Perhaps it would be fair to assume she acquired it when she was 30. With 40 years more to go, being 70 in 1839, the little old coffee table seems to be of fairly respectable age. It would be interesting to know something about the date when these conveniences were originally conceived. If births in high places are an indication of the absence or presence of such pieces of furniture, one might assume the ladies of the 1700's possessed them not, while the ladies of the 18th century did. And I guess I should correct the foregoing to make the first group read of the 1600's, which was the XIVth Louis' reign, as the 1700's were the XVth's.

Well, so much for a trip to the graveyard. And so back to domestic things. I learned from J. H. tonight that the General is coming to Melrose alone, his wife going on to her sister in Shreveport. J. H. says the General isn't well and he is a little worried about his health. It is thought the General will remain here for a few days. That ought to pretty well cook the goose for Roane and Alice.

On departing, Dr. Postell had many kind things to say, and some observations to make about the correctness of which there would be ground for differences of opinion. He says Melrose under the mulattoes bore a mulatto impress; under the Madam her personality; and now it is bound to take on mine, since I seem to have fallen heir to keeping it going. He says people up and down Louisiana tend to identify the Henrys with business and me with Melrose. I told him of the July 4th revelations, that, had I not been here last November, the buildings would have been boarded up and the gardens allowed to go to seed, - and the next inevitable step, the plough. He agreed Melrose is a national monument of a way of life fast fading. I told him life would be worth while if this pattern might be preserved a little longer as an inspiration to those of us who came a little late.....

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Sunday, August 28th, 1949.

Memorandum:

For a moment, I would go back to Friday night.

To paraphrase the Bible: - The heavens declared the glory of God.

It was between 11 and 12 when, after sealing your Memorandum, I stepped out onto the gallery for a quiet cigarette before going to bed. The sky wasn't studded with stars. It wasn't spangled. It was just plain powdered with stars from horizon to zenith. Hours before the thin golden sickle of the new moon had slid below the rim of the Montrose hills and it would be 4 or 5 hours before day. But there it was, - a marvelous silvery dawn, lasting throughout the night, with a glow that lighted up the White Garden like a full moon, deepening the line of the bamboo hedges and the magnolias into something closely akin to a shade. Two or three times before I have witnessed this phenomenon. It recalled the 1836 shower of meteors that fell on Alabama, and spilled over into Mississippi for Benjamin Chase to marvel at from the window of his town house in Natchez. I regretted I had but old Grandpa by my side to ponder on the glory of God.

Saturday wasn't such a bad day, in spite of the marvelous weather which ought to have produced more pilgrims than it did. James Aswell telephoned me in the morning, asking my aid in establishing some facts for him in his current job of writing captions of Natchitoches and Cane River pictures, scheduled to appear in the November Collier's article. He said Rosalyn is doing a portrait. I didn't ask him how the lady doctor's is getting along. He also told me something interesting about "Dinner at Antoine's", which, as you will recall, appeared under the authorship of one Frances Parkinson Keyes. He says that not she but Herman Deutsch, wrote the book, as anyone acquainted with the style of the two authors mention can readily determine. He says Madam Keyes made an arrangement with Herr Deutsch whereby he contrived the book and she issued it under her name, each party receiving 50 per cent of the royalties. With all the wealth she is possessed of and all the books to her credit, isn't it remarkable that she still is goaded by such a mania to get her name on more?

If memory serves, you once read me an article in The Saturday Evening Post about Avery Island and Mr. Edward McIlhenny, written by the same Mr. Deutsch. I don't seem to know anything about the man, but assume he may live somewhere in the Louisiana area.

One more note for Saturday: - the first ginning of the season got under way, with a modest three bales as a starter. And Pany's wife's father, Papa Dave, died of a stroke.

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As for Sunday, it has been remarkably quiet in these parts. Dr. Rand came by at 11. He wanted to talk about Andre Michaux, the botanist, with me, and without too much difficulty, persuaded me to have lunch with the family at the camp. It was pleasant.

Before 8 this morning, I had been to pay my final respects to an old negress down the road whom I have known for ever so long and from whom I have heard many an interesting tale about slavery times, for, as near as can be determined, she was born in 1839. She used to have a papershe greatly treasured, - a bill of sale, dated June 3rd, 1861, describing her as "a likely negress, good washer and ironer", and giving her age as "about 22". The person selling her wouldn't be likely to add any extra years unwittingly, since 20 was the magical figure that usually brought the maximum price. She was so old her family seemed to take her death more as the passing of a season rather than the departure of an individual and the people I found in the cabin were taking things with unusual calm.

After dining with Dr. Rand, Mrs. Rand asked me to go with her to take some coffee and cakes to Puny's father-in-law's, - half way between here and Montgomery. Zelma's father's name was Dave, and I liked him. None of the family was home, except the widow, all the children and grandchildren having gone to the Funeral Home in Natchitoches. The widow, a squat, kindly negress, invited us in. We inspected the pretty wreath made of white and purple crepe paper a daughter had fashioned. The widow told us how her husband had gone out Saturday morning, after having made his coffee, and taking his bridle down from the hook on the gallery went down the steps. A little later the barking of their dog attracted her attention, and going to see what was up, found Dave lying on his side by the gate. He died before she could get him into the house.

It was hot and the widow was fanning herself with a catalogue of some kind, and she handed Mrs. Rand and me a dozen pages each, apparently torn from a Sears-Roebuck catalogue, for fans. The lady had set out her shoes to be sipped into whenever any callers came, but in the midst of our call, she suddenly remembered she was in her bare feet, and apologizing, explained she had been so surprised to have white folks calling, that she had plum forgot to comb into her shoes. And we told her we were glad because it was a mighty hot day and if we didn't have to leave right away, we would be taking off our shoes, too, it is so much cooler that way.

It occurs to me that you might by chance, while adventuring in 4th Avenue, stumble over a Michaux volume or two. The ones I have seen were invariably bound, about the size of the average French novel, and carried full page illustrations. Since the text is in French, it is possible an occasional volume might stray on to a bargain table, and if priced moderately any volume might well be a bargain.

So many things to talk about, and yet I am taking too much of your time, what with the vacation days having piled up too many things in your absence, and so I shall break off with reluctance.....

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Monday, August 29th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Before I forget it, I must tell you something hilarious that happened yesterday.

When Dr. Rand came for me yesterday to have luncheon at the camp, we walked from Yucca to the Melrose garage, where he wanted to pick up a battery for his speed boat. The manager of the garage was absent and so Dr. Rand transacted his business with a mulatto mechanic. When Dr. Rand inquired the price of the battery, he told the youth he would mail him a check. Uncertain of Dr. Rand's identity, the youth asked me if I would guarantee the charge. I told him I would.

It was then that a woman's head was thrust through the office door, the wife of the manager, Mrs. Napoleon Bonapart Carter, whose fancy name belies her plain person, and in a somewhat preematory voice she inquired:

"Mr. Francois, you've been here for ten years and aint done nothin' yet, so how can you guarantee the sale."

Isn't that wonderful.

Naturally I could scarcely wait until 5:30 this morning when I ran up on J. H. and a couple of dozen negroes on the store gallery. With such an audience, a lusty response was assured, and the recital sent all of them into gales of laughter which has echoed all day, for whenever I have encountered any, the grin a mile wide, repeating:

"Here ten years and ain't done nuthin' yet."

Late this afternoon I had pilgrims from New Orleans, the most colorful I have yet encountered. They were two ladies and a gentleman who told me on greeting them that all they wanted to see was the mansion and the old shack where Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote Uncle Tom's Cabin. I apologized for the lack of a mansion to show them and offered to let them inspect another building of some literary interest in lieu of Mrs. Stowe's shack. But they were adamant. But they were not to be discouraged either, and for a moment it looked as though a wand would have to be waved to create a mansion in a twinkling. But before the quandary had been solved, one of the ladies explained that her primary interest in seeing the place stemmed from the fact that she has been a next door neighbor to Mrs. Henry's sister in New Orleans. I expressed astonishment at this news, confessing I knew of but one sister Mrs. Henry had ever had, a little girl of 7 who died in the 1870's. And this made the lady feel very happy, because she could tell me particulars about the Madam's genealogy that I had never heard before. She recommended that I brush up on my family history, and I told her

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I really must, and to begin with, I would ask her if she recalled the Mrs. Henry who was executed a few years ago for having murdered a man somewhere in South Louisiana. She remembered the circumstances very clearly. I asked her, on the strength of her knowledge covering that case if I would be justified in explaining to future pilgrims that that murderess was also Mrs. Henry's sister. Her face beamed momentarily, but then darkened, and she began fumbling at her purse. She said she wanted to pay me for my trouble. I told her I was so refreshed by the originality of her approach that money could never recompense her for the relaxation she had afforded me. Again she looked a little puzzled, and then suddenly turning to her two companions, said:

"Come on, let's get out of here. I have never been through anything like this before. I feel I am going crazy." I bowed and smiled my assent, and off my pilgrims flew. Isn't it a pity we shall never know what the lady will tell "Mrs. Henry's sister" about the old mansion and the Stowe shack at Melrose.

This morning I tuned in on the Weather Report for the Manhattan area, hoping the day of your return to Madison Avenue would be ever so pleasant. But according to my informant, the hurricane which last week suggested it might come this way, ended up by spilling water all over the metropolitan area, accompanied by high winds. That doesn't strike me as being exactly like kicking out the Red Carpet, and I hope you didn't get blown about and soaked.

What with one thing and another, I discovered last night, while listening to the Bob Trout show that a week or so ago Francis, Cardinal Spellman traveled to Hyde Park to eat humble pie on the doorstep of the First Lady of the World. Now that is something I should have liked to see, - and hear. Something tells me terrific pressure must have been put on that gentleman to force him to soil his gorgeous scarlet skirts by such a wilful encounter with such an "unworthy mother". We shall probably never know just who did the pushing, but I shouldn't be at all surprised if it may have come from the Holy Papa himself, for surely the Spellman letter and the resounding clatter it caused must have echoed violently within the walls of the Vatican.

What with every dusky hand on the plantation busy at the cotton bowls and the gin going full blast, I continue a lone fight against the Johnson grass at Arenbourg. But I have it pretty well confined to places beyond the confines of the magnolias and things of - matter, and so I don't mind how mightily it flourishes temporarily. The growing season for the persimmons and some of the pears has passed, and the native persimmons are shedding their leaves. At first I thought this premature, but on looking over the situation at Melrose for comparison, I notice all the native ones are now bare. All in all, it has certainly been a wonderful growing season, and everything planted last autumn must be pretty firmly established by now, and thus the better fortified to withstand a drought, should one come this way next year.

Tomorrow promises to be a full day, continuing work on some kind of an article, etc., and a couple of visitors. So glad you are back...

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Tuesday, August 30th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Another day of perfect weather, with a deliciously cool dawn on the terrace at Arenbourg.

When I returned to Melrose for breakfast, I brought along some big white lilies for Puny to take to his father-in-law's funeral. Before he came for them, I gathered another bouquet of red and yellow cannas, and a third of purple althias and an armful of butterfly lilies. Puny was enchanted when he cast eyes on the assortment, but not half so fascinated as I when I saw him set to work on combining the whole business into one enormous display. Without giving the matter any thought at all, I had supposed he would decorate the casket, perhaps with one bouquet, - say the big white lilies, and arrange the other groups of flowers about the bier and later transfer them to the grave. But I didn't count on Puny. Grabbing the big lilies for the center, he worked the purple althias around them, and then encircled the althias with the red and yellow cannas, encircling the whole with the great sprays of butterfly lilies. I declare it was the biggest bouquet I had ever seen, although, strangely enough, rather striking as to color combinations in an inimitable sort of way.

I had company and couldn't attend the funeral, but I shall always regret photographs didn't record it. For the life of me, I can't picture what the casket must have looked like, - if, indeed, anyone could see it, under such a fat floral piece.

A great many Melrose people attended, J. H. sending a truck load of them from the plantation. The services were scheduled for 11 o'clock at Morris Hill Baptist Church, perhaps 5 miles to the North East, and possibly a couple of miles this side of the Montgomery ferry. I think my secretary did not attend, and Peter, Murrel and Beau Mack didn't. But about everyone else did, I guess, and on the morrow, I reckon I shall have a full and varied account of the proceedings.

Ora came down at 9 to read me a short story and read one back to me from my notes. She writes well and gave me some much needed assistance before departing at the sound of the dinner bell.

Mrs. Coombs dropped in from 12:30 until 1:30 to pass along some information I had requested regarding some of her Relief clients. Mrs. Holloway arrived at 1:30 with her photographer and

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remained until after supper. I think the photographer got some good photographs, but I was sorry he had to do the last few under difficulties, what with a flashlight bulb somehow exploding and burning his hand.

I devoted myself almost exclusively to dictating an account of the Madam's career from the time she graduated from the Normal until she had things going full tilt at Melrose. Mrs. Holloman will transcribe the stuff between now and Friday, and as I have at last found the sentence for the beginning of the article on Melrose as a memorial, I think we may be able to start whipping it into some kind of shape. The opening sentence, if you are interested, I think may well turn out to be a quotation from the Madam:

"My idea of success is helping the other fellow to realize his dreams, or possibly:

"to make his dreams come true."

Mrs. Rand had given me a thumb nail sketch of the Hollomans, but I was interested when on the way to the front gate tonight, she mentioned she was or is the sister of Mrs. Harding, whose husband has the camp on Melrose, down beyond Clemence's house. Mr. Harding had two sons by his first wife. After his wife's death, he married a second time, the new wife being a sister of the present Mrs. Holloman. Then, as a first marriage, Mrs. Harding's sister married Mr. Harding's son. There is a child by this marriage, and for all I know, it may be that person one used to hear sung about on the radio, - "I am my own grandpa....."

Following a divorce of the younger Hardings and by the Hollomans, - Mr. Holloman having been a partner in law practice with Judge White, Mrs. Rand's father, the present marriage of the Hollomans was celebrated quietly, and that, so far as I know, is that.

Just to keep the record straight, perhaps I should point out that the short stories I am attempting, I am doing by myself, having Ora read them back to me, whereas the stuff I am dictating to Mrs. Holloman will be used primarily for publicity purposes for the benefit of the Cane River country in general and Melrose, Yucca and Arenbourg in particular, with circulation primarily concentrated on the Gulf area, unless the stuff should spill over into sufficient space to merit attention by some national magazine. For local reaction, it may possibly be better if the Holloman notes appear under her name, as you may readily understand.

Dr. Alben and Dr. Pierce of the Federal Department of Agriculture were here for supper, and some people from whatever department runs the Rural Electrification Administration. The talk was good and as the day has been fairly full, I shall probably need little rocking to put me to sleep.....

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Wednesday, August 30th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Another fine day, with lots of people passing this way, but none of whom I encountered, thank heavens, - mostly friends of the J. H. Henrys, I guess. Mrs. Rand stopped by the store on the way to the camp with some of her grandchildren from Shreveport, but was in a hurry, and so didn't get as far as Yucca, although she did take the trouble to send me some home made candy by Puny. She is planning to return to Cane River tomorrow, Puny says.

Another nice letter from Mr. Harness which you will enjoy reading. The Andrews-Schreiber reference, you may recall, concerns the granddaughter of the Black Swan, living in Coronado. Isn't it sweet of Mr. Harness to send me his finest piece of iron wood which he obviously loves so well. I shall write him that although paper weights may be useless, I have four or five on my desk regardless, - because I like them.

There was some kind of a business heading out from the store today that I want to know more about. A big old truck, covered by a canvas, giving it the appearance of a motorize covered wagon, fitted out with wooden benches inside, was filling up with people from this neighborhood when I passed by the store about 3 this afternoon. I saw my secretary's grandmother enter the thing, then an elderly blind mulatto lady who is Little King's wife's aunt, and Uncle Nathan Carpenter, aged 86. I assumed there was going to be a frolic for some old folks somewhere in the neighborhood but I was wrong. For Murrell passed this way about 7 o'clock, saying his grandfather, Uncle Ben Williams who is crowding 90, had gone away "on that truck taking everybody who is ailing off to Houston, Texas". I was floored. Murrell explained that some man over yonder claims that by praying, he can cure anybody of anything "if they wasn't born with it". He says it only costs six dollars, and a heap of the old people from around here raked up six dollars a piece, and the truck, sent out from Houston for all comers, headed Westward a little before sun down. They are supposed to be back by Friday.

I don't know how far it is to Houston, but I imagine it is about 400-miles. What all those poor old things will be like on Thursday morning, after jolting about in that canvas covered truck all night, I cannot imagine. It strikes me on their arrival prayers for the dead or dying will be more in order than prayers for the ailing.

I hoped my secretary might volunteer a little information, but

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I got no rise to a couple of leading questions, and so I skipped the whole business. I reckon he probably feels his grandmother is engaged in some foolishness and would rather forget about it. Surely there is some catch to the thing, patent medicine in the offing or some such, but what the trick is, I know not. But many a tendril on my grape-vine will be functioning shortly after all these old people return, and I shall certainly be glad to pass the news along. As flim-flams go, however, this one seems unusually cruel, what with the wear and tear of the journey on these poor old people, not to mention the false hopes it creates within them, only to be destroyed after such an exhausting will-of-the-wisp jaunt which certainly ought to wear most of them out if it doesn't actually kill them.

I haven't been listening much to my radio of late, and to what I am pleased to call "The Bible Slappers" at all. But I imagine the above business is some hoax stirred up by some of those religious fanatics who certainly are adept at trumping up strange doings. A few of them function on American stations, but the more rabid ones seem to broadcast over Mexican stations in some way affiliated with offices or stations on the American side of the border. I shall follow through the present case with some thoroughness, for surely the aged, sick and blind should be protected from such wolves.

This evening I turned to a fresh page for the guest book in the African House to begin the month of September. I guess about 80 names have been entered, being about one third of the people who have passed this way. Assuming 240 to be a conservative estimate for the past month or six weeks, without taking into account such large groups as the couple of hundred coming at the same time on a single tour, the daily average seems fairly high for such a remotely situated place. I shall endeavor to keep a more complete and accurate record in the future, so we shall have some comprehensible idea of actual numbers of visitors, what seasons they are more numerous, which days of the week shape up as the heaviest and so on. I ought to contrive some mark or sign to indicate those who are intelligent, average and dumb. Such information ought to be worth something to somebody for something or other but for whom and to what point, I cannot imagine.

The old grandfather's clock has just struck twelve a couple of times, which probably means its about 10:30, for if it ever runs down, I never bother to set it when I start it up again, since it is the delicious tinkle of the bell as it strikes the hour twice that enchants me and not any particular minute it may be recording. The clock had to be moved about a bit during the painting period and not being put back quite level, it has been resting for a week or two. I devoted ten seconds to getting it on an even keel this afternoon, and with one push of the pendulum, the old time piece started off as gayly as ever, without the slightest suggestion that it is about a century and a half old. But in spite of its spryness, I should hate to hazard it on a jaunt to Houston with the rest of the oldsters from around here....

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Thursday
September 1st, 1949.

Memorandum:

It was cloudy, with a laggardly dawn at 5 this morning, and must to my satisfaction, a slight drizzle developed a little before 6. It didn't sprinkle enough to do any good, but the impulse was in the right direction anyway.

Celeste and Madam Regard took off for Mansura this morning. This afternoon J. H. did something I never knew him to do before, - he indulged in a nap. I believe his stomach is upset and he didn't come down for supper.

Determined to finish off a flock of little odds and ends, too long cluttering up my peace of mind, I told the clerk at the store I would see no pilgrims today. Accordingly I was able to putter around without interruption, and I liked it. The only people I saw were an occasional negro who would pass by to say howdy.

When Clemence was here the other day, I asked her if she couldn't spell out her name in my Audubon autograph book for me. She could, by dint of some struggling, and then, under it, knowing of my fondness for her parasols, she sketched a ratty looking umbrella, which delighted me, of course. Now that was on the left hand page of the open book and at the bottom. A few more names were added at the top of the right hand page, bringing the next signature to the space about opposite Clemence's signature. A coal black youth, Tom Latkin, a friend of mine from Little River, dropped passed while I was stirring up something or other on the back gallery. Before he left, I asked him if he wouldn't like to write in my book. He would. I pointed to some pencils in the harness vase and Tom went at it. A few minutes passed and I noticed him still struggling, left handedly, no less. A little while longer, and Tom presented me with the book. Obviously to his delight, he had found a red pencil, but to my utter astonishment and enchantment, I discovered Tom had not only written down his name and the date of his birth, - July 14th, 1932, but had also in red pencil had duplicated Clemence's ratty old umbrella, slap on the opposite page. What impelled him to attempt such a flight into Art, if, indeed, it was simply a whimsey, I wouldn't know. All I hope is that once having contrived a parasol under his signature, he won't feel that hence ever more that is part of the paraphernalia that goes along with a signature, and when he does to register with the Draft Board or whatever, he gums up the registration card with a flamboyant umbrella, to boot.

As one old plantation mistress would have phrased it:

"Those niggers are sights."

007E

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Tomorrow the aged, halt and blind are scheduled to return from their jaunt to Houston. I have heard but a thin slice of information regarding the business. Peter tells me the man is colored and done so well he has a fine building and something like a hotel where the folks can stay. Peter further says that the old folks are about the only ones who can go because they have their old age pension checks, and so can scrap up the six dollars required. He further states that "Tante Zette, that blind mulatto lady, some kin to Little King's wife, she's goin' because some of her kind folks what was jus' a draggin' around, they done went and come back a-throwin' away their old sticks by what they'd bees a-walkin' before". And Peter also says that one of those rich mulattoes up the road went but came back just like he left, the doctor having told him he couldn't do anything for him, since a curse had been put on him a long time back for his bad behavior. "You know that man what's about 40, up yonder beyond Sammy Balthazar's place, the one what's they calls Cammie Meziere, what rigged up the stove with electric light wire one day and then asks his papa to go light the fire so they could all have coffee, thinking openin' up the stove would kill his papa and then he would git all his money."

Well, Lord, as you may readily discern, there is plenty of hocus-pokus all tangled up with the business before the poor Cane River residents put their tottering foot on the first step of the ladder taking them to the old canvas covered truck. Apparently the man must be come kind of a sepiu male who contrives miracles in the best approved Mary Baker Eddy style, and probably a survival of his cross-country oldsters depends primarily on their own power to successfully exert mind over matter, - split infinitive and all.

I must consult with the Rands, - for they have sense, about a horticultural feature that has long interested me from personal observation but about which the so-called experts, like little Miss Dormon, who can tell me soon enough that Giant's Beard is really Ophiopogon Jaburen, - which I already know, but never gets around to answer my question as to what other period than Spring most plants seem to experience another growing time. I can't say that I notice it every year, and certainly some plants stagger around both Spring and other times without making up their minds at all, until one sweet day when they seem to have made up their equally sweet minds, - and it may be in August rather than April, they suddenly sky-rocket most unexpectedly. What I should like to find out if all plants tend to have two periods of growth, - one in early Spring and the other after the full heat of summer has begun to cool a little. It seems to me that that is the situation with some of the Arenbourg children, and I notice that some of those whom I had expected to jump earlier in the year leaped not at all, while others I didn't notice particularly four or five months ago, seem to be carrying on high at the moment. It should allow them about ten weeks, I suppose, before the first frost passes around this way, and that ought to give them timme to consolidate their gains. But I must have some definite information on this tendency, and having acquired it, will pass it along....

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Friday, September 2nd, 1949.

Memorandum:

The weather remains perfect. Much laughter seeps through the bamboo from the cotton fields beyond where the scarcity of pickable cotton affords much time for the would-be gathers to frolic. The gin chugged along feebly in the late afternoon. Last year by September 2nd something over 100 bales had tumbled forth from the presses. Up to first dark only 11 bales have bounced thus far this year.

As between Baton Rouge and Melrose during the day conflicting telephone calls transpired. First the General alone would come to Melrose, arriving next Monday night for supper. Then he and his wife would come on Saturday. Then he and his wife would come tnoht, arriving at 5:30. Supper was accordingly held, and thanks to a detour encountered along the way, they arrived a little after 7. The French fried potatoes, prepared at 5:30 were wonderfully solid and shivery by then, but conversation made up for the dullness of the food.

While we all were still at table, the General said he had heard from travelers of the educational value of a Melrose tour. He asked me if any of the Henrys had ever taken one, and when I said:

"Well, not yet, but there is always hopes",

everybody laughed and he said he would like to make an appointment with me for Saturday morning, and which time he would like to do the whole thing, omitting nothing. I raised an eyebrow at such a large order and confided to him to beware both of exhaustion and a trick I play on all pilgrims, to wit:

After observing their reaction to the type of stuff being dished out, I determine in advance at which point along the route I shall concentrate most heaving on some particular building so that long before the big house is reached, the pilgrim will be so satiated with particulars about ye olde plantation that he will pray to be permitted to skip an inspection of Melrose proper. Thus armed in advance, he might select a comfortable couch before leaving the big house so he may stagger in its direction about the time the tour is approaching its termination.

As a matter of fact, I have already laid a trap for him by

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placing a scrapbook on the table in the cool of the back gallery of Yucca, and when he reaches that point, the book will be opened at the place where large photographs on adjoining pages show the Madam's bedroom and her scrapbook on the back gallery of the big house. There are a lot of typed notations pasted along side these, and I know the sight of them will impell this unsuspecting pilgrim to collapse forthwith into a convenient arm chair, and the tour will come to an abrupt end there and then.

As I was writing the last word in the above paragraph, my eyes wandering over the White Garden, bathed in moonlight, the shadow of the bamboo hedge intensified momentarily and forth stepped the Dark Duke. He was in search of his brother, Peter, and having just arrived on foot from Little River, thought I might know if Peter had gone to the honkey tonk or some other gathering scheduled for Friday night. He wanted Peter to help him find someone with a car to take his wife to Alexandria, for she apparently is on the point of having a baby, and transportation is the thing. He said he had made an arrangement with his brother-in-law, Jeff Johnson, who lives on Mr. Charlie's Little River Farm, but Jeff's wife, who is Log's sister, wouldn't let the car go unless she went along, and Jeff wouldn't let her go, and thus a family scuffle had developed, with Log leaving them all to scuffle it out while he started afresh in search of an automobile, hoping against hope to beat the old on-coming stork.

Just as Log was finished explaining his problem, the hedge parted a second time, and through it stepped Peter. And so the brother have departed, and may the old bird not win the race.

On the store gallery this morning, I saw Tante Zette, still using her cane and, I take it, still blind, what with a little boy along to lead her. And a few little pieces trickle through from other sources regarding the Houston flim-flam. Mrs. Vernon Cloutier's cook made the hejira a while back. She says the miracle healer doesn't see any of the patients individually, but several hundred of them daily gather together in an auditorium, where they are addressed by the man of God who gives them a pep talk, properly arranged as to lead up to the wonders of healing and the symbol of that power, as inherent in a little medal, sold at the door on their way out. This penny do-dad is priced at only 3 dollars, and many people buy more than one, and several people visiting the place once, come back a second and third time, and buy more. Several hundred people a day spending three dollars each for something costing practically nothing, and so the wheel spins. Let Our Lady of Lourdes look to her laurels, for if she doesn't watch out, old Houston will have her back backed off the map....

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Sunday, September 4th, 1949.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your air mail in Saturday's post. It was so thoughtful of you to send it along so I might be assured before the week end that everything is rocking along alright. The other letter you mention as being already on the way will undoubtedly arrive on Labor Day, for, as you know, we get deliveries here on holidays.

And thanks for mentioning the hour of the Bob Trout show, - 9 o'clock Melrose time. I shall have my desk cleared by that hour and be properly flattened out to receive the program when it starts.

It has been a quiet week end thus far, by luck. Sister telephoned Friday, saying she would like to bring herself and husband, the children and two other couples to spend the prolonged holiday here, but when she learned the General was arriving on Friday evening, she did a right about face, proving again that Andrew Carnegie and a million other people were right in assuming that luck plays an enormous factor in everyone's existence.

Both Saturday, the 3rd, and Sunday, the 4th, are souvenir days for me, the 4th being Lyle's birthday and the 3rd being the day I first crossed Cane River, - and liked it. Yesterday Little King passed this way, bearing a couple of paper roses, one white one pink, which his mama, - Zelma, had sent to me in memory of her father at whose cabin Mrs. Rand and I stayed (I wonder why the "y") - last Sunday. And so I have put them in the Harness ten pin vase here on my desk, knowing full well that Lyle would appreciate negro paper flowers on display in his honor, and liking them myself as a pleasant gesture from Zelma.

The sisters Haupt, - Bertha and Hope, bore down on me at 5:15 last night with three pilgrims as the balance of their party. They are the Art teachers at the College and hadn't been this way in a year. I can never figure out how it is so many otherwise cultivated people, blow in on Saturdays between 5 and 7 p.m. Quite frankly, I must say, that I think of all mental operations, - memory, reason penetration and so on, - the greatest of all is imagination. I take it The Bible pre-supposes this to be true, since in our own actions, according to Christian tenants, we are supposed to treat others as we would have them treat us, imagination is the prerequisite of the mere functioning of The Golden Rule. And yet what imagination people use, and

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if they do exercise it, what conclusion they can possibly reach, if arriving on ye old plantation for a tour between 5 and 7 on Saturday nights, I cannot figure out for the life of me. I don't quite dare ask 5 to 7 o'clock Saturday afternoon visitors "How Come", fearing they may confess it is their usual supper hour and that they had hopes.....for too often there have been Saturday evening supper guests and the slap-dash slinging of food by servants who want to get started on the week end frolic leaves ever so much to be desired.

I talked with Roane this afternoon. She told me there is a letter in the mail, explaining that Alice cannot get away on this go-round. She said she thought I should hesitate about coming to Natchez because of the changes going on, that the traces were still comparatively intact, and that I must look at the 1949 oil millionaires as but re-births of the golden 1850 era. I'll leave her to do the looking while I look the other way. She said Clara Mazick, the mulatto mistress of Oakland plantation is dead, - the Oakland between Laurel Hill and Beverly, having the elegant old house. Her cousin is the attorney settling the estate and he told Roane he thought she might be able to buy it if she cared to enlarge Beverly. I wish she would for she might be kind to the old house, and Beverly's house has gone.

I find myself wondering if "The Dark Duchess" won out in her race with the stork. On Saturday afternoon Log passed this way, having stumbled over a bottle, I suspect, on the way. He said he was making arrangements with Bill Lorenz, going to Alexandria to take his wife along to the hospital. But later I learn that the Llorenz car had left an hour before and that Log's wife was with her sister, half way between here and the spillway, vainly waiting for transportation. How confusing the world must have seemed to the poor thing. Shortly after dark, Peter passed this, he, in turn, apparently having stumbled over a small glass of whiskey. He said, in response to my inquiry as to his brother's whereabouts:

"I might as well predominate myself, even though Log is my brother, I don't think he is givin' his wife all what looking after she needs right now."

The Lord alone know where Peter picked up that "predominate" word from, or what he thinks it means. Perhaps he just liked the sound of it and threw it into his conversation regardless. The more pompous preachers are forever indulging in imposing sounding words whose meanings they seldom know. But it is the rythm and sound that one is supposed to listen to when they are preaching and not the sense their oratory makes.

I have been quite alone on the plantation since the last pilgrim departed. All the Henrys are in town, having left right after dinner, and are supping at the Payne Henrys, I believe. It is so pleasant to be alone under the circumstances and Grandpa and I had a fine supper together on bread and milk and fried chicken and angel food cake which Grandpa seemed to adore.....

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Monday, September 5th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Labor Day, and although the postman made his accustomed rounds, he didn't labor too heavily. Somehow I had expected three letters, none of which came to hand, the one you mentioned in your air mail, the one Roane mentioned in her telephone conversation, one from Robina mailed last Friday, not to mention the paper weight from Mr. Harness. And what came to hand was the enclosure from Dora, and a lot of trash. Tomorrow, if the old T. and P. Railroad can stagger under it, there ought to be an imposing bundle.

The General got off just after dinner. The Baton Rouge Henrys and Celeste came over to Yucca an hour before the dinner bell tapped, bringing with them much ice and Coca-Colas to go along with the Kentucky whiskey, from General Miles' private stock, which had been brought to me from the Kentucky Derby earlier in the summer, but was inadvertently left at Baton Rouge when the folks came up in July. We had a pleasant hour under the punks, and their Melrose visit terminated ever so happily all round.

A little episode with colored characters transpired yesterday which I didn't get around to share with you in yesterday's note. It has such an interesting psychological twist, I know you will find it interesting. A little before sun down, Little King, in reality a strapping youth in spite of his name, tapped on my window. I finished the sentence I was writing and then went to the door. His fine white Sunday shirt was sticking to him, covered as he was, in sweat. He said Good Evening in his usual voice, and then to my surprise, burst into sobs. I immediately sense that something terrific must have happened, and I had him sit down in a chair along side mine, so that when the first paroxysm had spent itself, he could tell all and so relieve the strain. As he slumped into the chair, a huge butcher knife, thrust in his belt but half concealed by his sport shirt, grazed my hand. I had an idea of what was in the offing.

For perhaps 4 or 5 minutes he continued to sob, and then, thanks to a glass of milk and a cigarette, he gradually got control of himself. He said he wanted to tell me something. I was a willing listener.

He said that all the boys, Peter, Elam, his Uncle Cy, - Little King's uncle, that is, and so on, had been back in the pasture playing baseball. And that when the game was over they had some

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cold beer, brought back to the pasture from the Melrose Social Club, and that his uncle Cy had started playing around, tag and such like, and that almost a scuffle had gathered momentum between Cy and Peter. But Little King thought Cy was afraid Peter would whip him and so Cy started worrying Little King. And things went on for a little while until somebody had to put a stop to it, and what with things as they were, and Little King being real mad by then, he grabbed a beer bottle and struck Cy over the temple with it and smashed the bottle. Here there was the break caused by further emotion, and I sensed, naturally, that the butcher knife would be the next article mentioned. It was. Shortly poor Little King regained sufficient control to speak again, and between sobs, he confessed:

"And after a while Cy got up, bleeding a little, and he walked over to his car, " - more sobs, - "and it wasn't until after he had driven plum out of the pasture and was well on his way home I remembered I had had my butcher knife in my belt all the time, - and now it was too late to use it."

For the unexpected in mental twists, I call that marvelous.

And let me hasten to say that his sobs had been genuine and the perspiration on my brow had rapidly developed naturally during the recital. The important thing at the moment, however, seemed to me to hinge on getting his mind off his "bad luck". His Sunday handkerchief was soiled with sweat and tears, and I asked him to rinse out one for me, fresh half an hour ago, and he might dip his in the water at the same time. He moved like an automaton toward the basin, while I moved speedily toward the big house where I rounded up a goodly plate of potato salad, cold ham, fried chicken and cold milk. Returning to Yucca, I found things ever so much better, the sobbing finished, and Little King busy draping the two handkerchiefs on a chair where the breeze from the fan would dry them. The sight of the food made him grin, and within 20 minutes the food had disappeared, the handkerchief fresh again, and my visitor physically fortified, and ready to return home, completely at peace with the world. I find it wonderful what restorative powers are wrapped up in a cold snack after a hot day and hotter tempers.

And speaking of heat, it was 92 this afternoon, and Mattie, the cook, headed out for the cotton patch this afternoon, following dinner. She fell out about 3 o'clock, and Dr. Yaeger told me, following his first visit that he would be back again tonight. There seemed to be some kind of a heart condition. To be perfectly honest, I hope she will take herself a prolonged vacation for Aurellia was immediately sent for, and I like Aurellia's cooking ever so much better. And then, too, what with Mattie being on the Welfare roles, a little vacation would not mean any financial pinch. So much for Labor Day in ye olde South.....

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Tuesday, September 6th, 1949.

That old postman paid a trick on me again. He even out did his Labor Day record, and brought me precisely nothing. One of these days he and the T. and P. will combine their forces and through a perfect bit of coordination, dump a sack full of things in my lap that will take me a week to plough through. There present dictum seems to be that "it never rains but it pours", - and so far as postal drizzles go, there isn't a cloud in the skies.

While I think of it, I must ask if you ever notice any kind of advertising by the makers of Underwood typewriters. Typewriters and sewing machines I don't recall ever having heard mentioned in time paid for spaces on the air, although stations from Shreveport or New Orleans sometime shout the virtues of this shop or that for their fine stock of office equipment. The other day it struck me that if Underwood does advertise, - or even if they don't, they might be interested in the history of the machine I am using. I don't know its precise age, although I do know it has passed the quarter of a century mark, and appears to be still going strong. I don't reckon the thing has any real claim to sectionalism, although among Southern operated typewriters, I suppose it has been hammered at by as many people of a literary bent as any below the Mason-Dixon Line. Undoubtedly many another machine has pounded out much more work, but it is doubtful if any single one has been the medium through which so many distinctive piece of literature have been brought forth. The question automatically rises in my mind: - Why hasn't some one ever done an article about some of the typewriters on which important state papers have been typed, historic messages spelled out, famous stories created. What about some of the White House machines, or are Government offices so amply supplied with the new creations that no machine lasts more than the stretch of an Administration. And what kind of a typewriter first reeled off Gone With the Wind, and what about the personal machine of that expert stenographer, taker of short hand and manipulator of the mechanical keyboard, - Thomas Woodrow Wilson.

What with things as they are, I guess it is too late to ever find out about the history of the machine belonging to the late Elizabeth Brandon Stanton, the one she used to keep on the piano in the drawing room of Windy Hill Manor, invariably flaunting a sheet of paper in its roller, with a couple of opening lines from the famous Stanton opus:

"Fata Morgana".

Surely the life expectancy of a typewriter must be long, - if one could but track down its illusive biography as it passes from hand to hand.

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On the home front the weather remains wonderfully fair. The gin rumbles and snorts every once in a while, kicking out the pitifully few bales coming from the fields where the cotton pickers tell me they are mighty tired when night comes on, not from picking much lint but from walking so many miles up and down the rows to find something to snatch at.

Tonight J. H. and Celeste are back in their house again. The newly polished floors and gleaming white walls give it the impression of a new dwelling on the inside, and in spite of the smell of fresh paint, I reckon their sleep will be the deeper, what with the satisfaction that comes with being back under one's own roof.

Some society to which Celeste belongs contacted me today to address a meeting they are scheduled to hold some time in October or November, I don't remember which. I was asked on what topic I wanted to speak. They said they would like something on Prose. Now I don't know much about Prose, but, by and large, it seems to me to be a fairly wide subject to cover in a single speech. I told them I was a little dubious. They made a concession and said I might talk on any subject I wanted to. A symposium of discontented young matrons struck me as being apt, but then, on second thought, it struck me that I might be I might better select something farther afield, and so I shall leave it to the inspiration of the moment when the day arrives.

In the field of correspondence, I felt an impulse to write Miss Nellie last night, but after starting, backed up abruptly when I remembered she usually heads for Natchez about Labor Day, and I would perhaps do well to wait to hear from her before taking pen in hand. I find it interesting that I haven't heard from Sister since her last visit. Such silences are so golden, may the great solitude continue indefinitely.

A telephone from Mrs. Holloman today announces she has been called to Baton Rouge for a few days, and so will not get up until Saturday, which is the worst in the week for attempting dictation. She says the photographs taken by the photographer with the burned hand, turned out alright. The mention of the lady reminds me of the article she wrote in which my name figured over abundantly. I shall attach a page from the article I sketched for the local papers but never sent in. I shall be glad when harvest time is over and I can grab Will Rodgers to weld the fineal atop the sun dial and adjust the arrow indicator. Then I want a couple of fences moved, and by that time I shall have thought up a couple of hundred other things. I heard the Bob Trout program Sunday night and of course was disappointed to learn they are going off the air again temporarily. Let us hope they start up again soon, for it is certainly an entertaining broadcast....

Yucca Sun
Dial

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Wednesday, September 7th, 1949.

Memorandum:

At long last, - the postman came through....

I chanced to be at the office when he arrived, and he remarked to the clerk that the latter might just as well hand me the whole pouch without troubling to sort things out, since 99 per cent of the pieces were for me anyway.

And my secretary arrived a little after first dark, and I selected but two letters for reading, - yours, naturally and Robina's.

Yours is one of the finest I have ever read, and your account of your vacation so vivid that it almost seems as though I were along. Naturally what touched me most deeply were the kind, kind things you had to say regarding your correspondent. How sweet of you....how much I wish I deserved a millionth part of it.

And thanks much for sending along Anita's letter for me. The clout over the head I mentioned in that letter came from Tillioah, of course, and although he sometimes prances through my night mares, which are extremely rare, I somehow feel that all his unkindness was wiped away when, a few days after all ties were terminated with his organization, and just before I was ready to take off for a visit to "Uncle George and Aunt Martha", I was able to visit him in his sick bed and to offer him a somewhat ostentatious bouquet. Somehow I think our score is about in balance, for if he still has the power to disturb an occasional dream, I'll bet dollars to doughnuts he is still worried and puzzled whenever he sees a bouquet.

And how nice of you to give me particulars regarding the termination of l'affaire Spellman. Don't you know?ransacked its files for a hundred miles in the Poughkeepsie neighborhood to find some old chapel fit for dedication, in order that the Cardinal, - who usually doesn't travel so far afield for such business, could use it as a face saving gesture. And Mrs. R.'s expressed hope that the Cardinal found as much of a tonic as she always does was or had all the ear marks of a sly dig. Surely you are so right in feeling that she won the whole scuffle, - hands down.

And thanks for offering to do something with the manuscript I mentioned. I sent it to Robina to have it put in a little

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better order. I took her suggestion, as appears in her letter, and telephoned James Aswell today, to ask his opinion. He was out but I talked with Rosalyn who does all his typing for him. She says Jimmy says a new writer should never use an agent; that magazines welcome material from new writers, and the copy readers for the magazine invariably go through the manuscript predisposed to accept it, since it is to their advantage with the magazine employing them if they can find acceptable material suiting the policy of the publication, - and its editor. She says an agent is desirable only after one's name has appeared in a magazine a few times, the agent serving not as a purveyor of one's material but rather as the financial agent, since he is able to get better prices by his promises to submit or withhold manuscripts from one publisher or another if the writer currently seems to be enjoying a vogue.

She says the name and address of the author should appear in the upper right hand corner of the first page of the manuscript, with the title of the story and the story itself beginning an inch or two below the name and address, - on the same page, and that an inch margin, - approximately, should be left at the right hand side of the page, and about an inch at the bottom of the page, as a convenience for the reader who may wish to make notations. The story itself, of course, should be double spaced.

She said something about clamping the whole thing together and the first page being in a color, - such as gray or yellow, a little different from the balance of the manuscript, but I don't think that imperative.

If you think the present thing merits submission to some magazine, we might send it to somebody. I guess it is too short for Reader's Digest. Ora suggested Harper, but somehow I had an idea Harper had suspended.

If your billions of demands should permit you to drop this manuscript in the mail for me, I should be entranced. Would you suppose it should not be folded, - really I wouldn't think for such a short story it wouldn't matter. I shall enclose a couple pieces of plantation stationery if you should care to write a little note to go with the manuscript, - to whomever you feel it ought to be submitted. I should think the letter to the publisher might read: "I am a new writer. (paragraph) I attach a manuscript of a short story for your consideration. (paragraph) If your publication is interested in similar material or articles more lengthy, I shall welcome your advice."

Rosalyn told me Colliers telephoned yesterday, saying the pictures submitted for the Natchitoches article are worthless, and that a new photographer would arrive today to do the whole thing over, so this will delay the December schedule.

I am so happy to have your Tuesday-Wednesday letter this Wednesday, and it is so good to know your vacation was so pleasant. Try to conserve the memory of it and its health giving properties for ever so long....

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Thursday, September 8th, 1949.

Memorandum:

A curious day, - hot as a biscuit during the morning, clammy and damp all afternoon and evening, with thunder rumbling madly in the distance, - but always remaining there, and a couple of no-account drizzles, insufficient to do any good, but adequate to knock the cotton picker out of their employment.

I never did decide if I got wet from digging narcissus bulbs too vigorously or if it was the slight sprinkle that produced the humid state of my garments, - so perhaps it was the combination. In any event, I succeeded in my undertaking, and bright and early in the morning I shall be setting out late autumn potentials under the pecane on Arenbourg, - and liking it.

It is very pleasant to be able to report that I have my reading machine back again, and although I have just let it squak once to see if it is actually functioning, it is enough to know that it is able to make a noise, and so be able to resume where I left off with little Marcel, - if and when I get around to it.

I am also happy to report that during the recent visit, neither the General nor his wife said anything more about the proposed October 3rd trip to Natchez. I must remember to ask Celeste if she put a bee in their bonnets, intimating that I really didn't want to go, or if, perhaps, they have decided to put off the business for another month, - or life time, I hope.

And while speaking of the Baton Rouge Henrys, I must report a most unfortunate remark made by the General's wife, who inclines to be something of an odd mixture, as between Celeste and Sister, and who sets high store, I think, on the sign of the dollar. Everybody was sitting on the gallery when Paynie's wife arrived in her Chevrolet, followed within five minutes by Celeste's most intimate friend, Mrs. Mat Herzog, - "Dee", - in her car, - also a Chevrolet. Conversation fell to "going-places", and the Baton Rouge lady remarked that the General insisted they go up to Ashville for a little while, - to stay at your hotel, - The Park Grove.

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"Just imagine", she exclaimed. Steve wanted to drive his Chevrolet on the trip. He said it was better for negotiating mountain roads. I told him we were going in my Cadillac, that I wouldn't be seen going anywhere in a Chevrolet."

Eyebrows twitched a bit all the way around, but the bag went on her merry way, oblivious to the brick bats she was hurling.

From Roane's letter, I take it she and Alice never had any intention of coming to Melrose. My imagination must have been working over time to have assumed such a trip was intended.

Tomorrow, circumstances permitting, I must try to get up the road a mile or so where Tenance de Meziere lives on the property family has occupied property since the early 1700's, when a mulatto child of the Marquis de Meziere, received a large grant from the crown. Old Tenance, now in his 70's, finds all his children dwelling far afield, some in California, some in Illinois, and he has decided to dispose of the family furniture and go to live with his children. It is said he has some fine armchairs, some iron beds and a few occasional pieces. I couldn't do much with an iron bed, but possibly there might be a Directoire table or a First Empire secretary that might be worth while, - assuming that down through the generations, the antique dealers haven't already culled the treasures in exchange for the iron beds, which during the early 1900's, were so fashionable in this area.

At one time the de Mezieres had some family portraits, too, but it is doubtful if any of these survive, although they might turn up in some unexpected hiding place, for I imagine they were relegated to some inconspicuous resting place long ago when the family found the presence of color in their make up to be ever so irksome.

Madame Aubin Roque once told me a rambling tale about an artist who lived for a while on Cane River during the 1860's, who staid with the de Mezieres, and I have always been hoping I might track down one of his pictures. I don't know if the man concentrated on portraits or landscapes but from something Madame Aubin said, I gathered landscapes were his preference, for she remarked once that the man "was always painting pictures of houses and cows and things that nobody cared anything about". Possibly he may have daubed off likeness of some plantation home in this area which might reveal how things were laid out in the 1860's, or possibly he might have recorded a portrait of some house in oil, - a building that subsequently has vanished forever.

But I see my enthusiasm on this will-o'-the-wisp score has brought me to the end of the page, and so I shall fold forthwith...

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Friday, September 9th, 1949.

Memorandum:

I shall long remember today as pleasantly coincidental. After mentioning in my Memorandum to you last night that there were at least a couple of things I should like to do on the morrow, --I sat down to read a paragraph from the Swann business, and happened to hit on the place wherein Swann, in a fury against Odette, sketched in his mind just what kind of a letter he would write her on the following day, should she have the nerve to send him a note, asking him for a few thousand francs so that she could take a house in Bavaria for the Wagnerian festival, and thus be able to invite the Verdurins but not include Swann himself. And the astonishing thing was that the letter he had imagine might be forthcoming actually arrived, and thereby afforded him the pleasure of denouncing the Grecy woman.

And then today dawned, and as seldom transpires, I actually did just about everything I had envisioned doing, but with scant hope of accomplishing anything along such a flimsy pattern.

And so tonight I am tired and satisfied, which I always find among the more pleasant sensations at the close of day.

But while it is on my mind, I want to thank you for your kindness in telling me about the charming book you have recently absorbed, the one centering about relations between the youth and old Mesmer. Coming from the source it did, dwelling upon the subject it does, perused at the time you did, and under the influence of the Catskills, the whole thing sounded like the most happy of combinations. And the mention of the bed that had come to old Mesmer by Madame de Lamballe, set off a whole train of happy thoughts in my mind, and at the same moment made me check up on some of my genealogies, which badly need dusting off, such as the Prince de Lamballe having been the son of the Duc de Penthièvre, who was the son of the Comte de Toulouse, who was the child of Louis XIV and Mme. de Montespan, if memory serves. And of course I always think of Mme. de Lamballe during those years when she lived with her father-in-law, - Penthièvre, at Sceaux, where such delicious 18th century days unfolded. But already I see my genealogy must need more than a dusting, since Sceaux, after Colbert's son's death, passed to the Duc and Duchesse du Maine, and so I find I am not so certain if Penthièvre was a du Maine or a Toulouse. And writing the du Maine name

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recalls to mind that in New Orleans, I believe, the street named for the duc du Maine, has eventually been made to read Dumaïne, although the Toulouse still remains intact.

But you can readily see what evil effect my reading of Proust produces, for I am wondering farther and farther afield, for you must admit it is quite a jump from Mme. de Lamballe's bed to the New Orleans French quarter.

I am glad to say I got the narcissus bulbs into the ground, and at just about the right time, I believe, for they are already beginning to show signs of re-awakening, and if the Bermuda grass into which they are almost completely bogged down doesn't hold them back too much, they ought to be in full flower within another ten weeks or so.

I spent quite a lot of time working on the fineal for the sun dial, and although it is properly placed in tonights belated moon, I think I shall find time on the morrow to take it down again, slap some paint on it, and generally give it another going over.

Mezieres
I also skipped up to the de Mezieres to see what wares were condemned for disposal. The house, a neat white frame building, was painfully spick and span and the three or four armoires and dressers, - all of gay '90 vintage, jumped out alarmingly from the pale blue walls of the several rooms in which these newly re-varnished items stood. Naturally I wanted none of them, but I did see a couple of things that entranced me, - but things they had not contemplated disposing of. There was a pleasant little early American desk, - not at all special, but pleasantly early, and made of walnut, I think. It stood about 4 and a half feet in height, and the front of the thing, swinging on hinges at the bottom, pulled out and down in the usual manner. There is a piece of metal, copper or tin, set in on the top, just above the place where the key to the front panel is located, the tin replacing as best as it could at the time, the whack of a Ynakee sword which had been applied with vigor to the somewhat fragile piece of furniture when General Banks was hurrying along the Cane River road in 1864.

This piece and another which attracted my eye, were not for sale, and I urged them not to dispose of them if it should turn out, as the old man thought, some of his children might want them. But, in the event they finally decided they didn't care about them, I asked him to let me know. And I shall arrange it so chance will establish contact as between the old man and me again before he finally disposes of all his household effects and departs into "outer darkness".

And now I fold, and may your day have been pleasant, too.

3806

102C

Sunday, September 11th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The weather is marvelous for our side of the fence but deplorable for the other side.

During the afternoon a splendid rain fell for about an hour, - perhaps an inch or two, - and since it fell with considerable intensity, I am quite sure it must have knocked out on the ground most of the little lint in the opened bowls. Unless an unexpected breeze springs up, whatever cotton remaining on the plants will not dry for a day or so, and it will take twice that time, I suppose, for the water to evaporate sufficiently from the rows so that the cotton sack can be dragged along without getting soaked. Surely this has been an unfortunate season for cotton planters in this section, while paradoxically enough, some hundred miles to the South where usually too much rainfall damages the crop, there has been practically no rain at all, and many a sugar planter in that neighborhood is crying for rain.

But on the Arenbourg side, today's downpour will set all the children's feet in water, and adequate dampness before the cooler weather set in will give them all precisely the required insulation against the expansion and contraction that accompanies the Jack Frost period.

I went to bed so early on Saturday night that I was astir before big day this morning, and accordingly spent a couple of hours on the terrace, marveling alike at the imposing array of Johnson Grass and the hardy, health green of the little magnolias, - of whom all seem to have come through the summer with flying colors. Heaven knows they will never see another more favorable for their initial establishment and early growth. Still I am grateful that none of them got contrary and just folded up their beards, as sometimes they seem to have a way of doing.

Saturday turned out unusually quiet, and although Mrs. Holloman passed this way, we didn't get any work done. She brought her friend, Miss Wells, with her, a lady who has been here before, and Mr. Holloman came, too, and I was glad to chat with him, although the social side contributed nothing to the labor end of the visit. Mr. Holloman was a junior partner of Mrs. Rand's father, and is now perhaps in his mid 60's, legally minded, but a pleasant person, even though a little inclined to want to nail down historical interpretation by Book and Verse, which doesn't always fit in since in reality, History sometimes gets sufficiently original as not to repeat itself precisely.

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While I think of it, I might refer to an unimportant item in the Emma story. In the original text, along about the final direct quote from Log, the text read the final text read: "way back or can't remember back to 1939 and '40". I am under the impression when Robina made the transcript, she left out the 19 figure, and should another transcript not yet have been made, I would be as happy if the thing did actually read with the full number, 1939 or '40, for that is the usual way the years are mentioned in the present century in this locality. But if the transcript has already been made, it isn't worth re-doing, for the matter is sheer whimsy on my part, and really doesn't matter a fig.

It is pleasant to report that all today's pilgrims were pleasant, including a couple of pleasant instructors from the college, newly arrived, somebody or other from Virginia who seemed accustomed to seeing old houses and apparently enjoyed seeing this old Louisiana layout as much as you and I enjoy a round at Monticello. Strangely enough such pilgrims are rare and all the time and energy expended on the others, - the "singing of psalms to a dead mule" don't matter if someone genuinely interested turns up every once in a while.

I was so glad to see Mrs. Rand, too. She brought her niece and some other woman and a man for a little tour, leaving the doctor, as she explained, doing a good job of nursing at the camp where there were several small children, it seems. She promises to come up for a day or two before long, and that will be pleasant.

Log had passed this way when the Virginia people were here. When he heard voices from inside the house, he did an about face toward the bamboo, for he is very considerate about withdrawing or not appearing when the coast isn't clear, but I left my guests, and asked him to wait for me on the gallery, which he did. But the wait proved too long and the cushioned pew of Grandpere Augustin on the gallery giving of the White Garden too inviting, so that when I returned, Log was "resting his eyes", and has been ever since, a matter of hours, so I guess he must have needed a little "shut eye". I reckon he is probably just back from Alexandria where perhaps a new heir has arrived at the Charity Hospital where Maxine is staying, and possibly there were libations in honor of the event, - I wouldn't know, but he seemed quite sober when he arrived.

Up and down the road, the week end was not very original: One boy on Magnolia Plantation was killed by his own truck; a dwelling next to Celine's burned. It belonged "to that man what's kin to Goose eye"; and Willy Anthony crowned his wife with a chair, requiring 8 stitches in her brow. And so to little Marcel

3808

3808

Monday, September 12th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Warm and humid with a shower again today, beginning in the middle of the afternoon and drizzling along until dark.

And speaking of "afternoon", I wonder if I have ever remarked that "afternoon" is a word never used by Cane River people. Frequently I hear the word employed by visitors, of course, and sometimes out-landers employ it when speaking to Cane River people of color, but the latter incline to reveal a vague expression at the sound of the word, and if, through the context of the sentence or by some mental struggle with their memory, they actually sense the meaning, they, in turn, so prone to use expressions of which they haven't the slightest concept of meaning, somehow never make use of "afternoon".

Night, locally, is night, beginning at some indefinite moment between first dark and dark. Morning begins only at "first day" and continues through "big day" slap up until high noon. But let 12 o'clock strike, and right then and there begins "evenin'", and "evenin'" carries straight through until "first dark". I still remember as vividly as though it were yesterday when I first heard "evenin'" used on Cane River. It was but a few days after I had arrived, when at dinner I decided I would leave for a little walk over to St. Augustin's immediately after coffee. It was a brilliant autumn day, just made for some kind of out of door ceremonies being held in the church yard. About half way to the bridge I met two young ladies and a gentleman, all of mulatto persuasion. The three of them bowed politely and more or less in unison said: "Good evenin'".

What with a 12:30 or 1:00 o'clock sun beaming down on us, I was but completely thunderstruck. Back home a couple of hours later, the 3 o'clock sun still beating down gaily, I am immediately remarked upon the phenomenon, - or what had struck me as extraordinary, in the salutation, but the Madam, taking such use of the words for granted after half a century of using the same expression herself, seemed equally puzzled for a moment as to what had puzzled me. I am under the impression Celeste and some of the Henrys say "afternoon", what with their manifold outside connections. I must eventually observe that point. And forgive me for dwelling at such tiresome length on a subject that can't possibly be of interest.

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One of the enclosures will suggest a consciousness on the part of a Louisiana correspondent as regards the curious doings of the Texas and Pacific Railroad and the Postal system and the slow up in last week mail deliveries. I hope such tangles don't occur too frequently, for while I have sufficient patience to await a reasonable length of time for deliveries, - and there was no rush about anything in transit at the time, still there are occasions when one counts of an item stemming from not more than a hundred miles within 3 or 4 days at most, and in cases when they announce the advent of pilgrims or some such, it is nicer to have them arrive before the pilgrims rather than a week later, as in the case of the Harnesses or somebody or other.

I saw Log this morning. He said he had just returned from Alexandria yesterday "evening" when he passed by to tell me about his new heir, - only to be cut short by pilgrims and Morpheus. It's another boy, - his first child being a year old now, and so instead of naming the child for Victoria, he and Maxine wanted to ask what I would say if they named it something like my name. Heaven alone knows what that may imply, and I should be not at all surprised to learn that in the end they hit on something like Tom, Dick or Harry.

In spite of this morning's humidity, I couldn't resist spending a little energy make life miserable for a few weeds at Arenbourg. I never did get far afield, getting too much engrossed in some lovely white lilies that deserved a little extra attention, and some nandina that could stand a little extra breathing space about them. One of the gardenias which I had thought completely passed out in the Spring is manifesting determined signs of life, and another has splendid leaves and a deep, health hue. The trumpet vine is crawling to glory over the old house and the Phillipine lilies have imposing seed pods on the point of bursting and thereby begetting more Phillipine lilies. I was soaking wet when I returned to Yucca, but withal happy because of the contact with our little firends. I have laid out the same costume for the morrow and dawn will see me damp again, and liking it.

With the plantation "resting" because of the current dampness, there is much opportunity to speculate on week end doings, and every tongue has something new to add to the strange case of Willie Dugard, the negro youth from Magnolia, who was killed on Saturday night. First accounts had it that death had resulted from the truck on whose front seat he was wri riding with the driver, had gone into the ditch, and when the boys riding in the back of the truck had come around to the front when it stopped, had found Willie dead. But subsequent examination of the truck reveals no glass broken in the windshield or lamps, and so it is difficult to account for the deep gash which severed Willie's jugular vein and so caused him to die of lack of blood. The driver sits in the Natchitoches jail, and all the talk is about Willie.....

3810

3810

Tuesday, September 13th, 1949.

Heavy showers again this morning, with a hot, humid sun this afternoon.

I liked both of them, but the top of my head got a little too hot when, during the course of an afternoon skirmish with the Johnson grass on the terrace at Arenbourg, I rode rough shod through a bumble bees' nest, - "les bourdons" winning the day, hands down. But thanks to the ample supply of mud all about, I stuck my head into a puddle, the resulting cake forming in my perruque, giving the oddest appearance, I imagine, as I stalked down the road toward Yucca.

Clemence came to see me during the late afternoon, "just making a round". This morning J. A. had remarked:

"You know Clemence has more sense than all of us. She has had someone print her a sign, whereon an admission charge to see her paintings is set down at twenty five cents, and she has the thing tacked up on her gallery."

I asked her about it this afternoon. She said she has converted her middle room into an "exhibity" where she has all kinds of pictures she has painted tacked to the walls, and anybody paying her twenty five cents can come in and "can look at any kind of painting they want to, 'cause all kinds is hanging there".

If I may be permitted to say so, Clemence is a sight.

Her front room is her bedroom and sitting room, with two double iron beds in it, along with several other items of furniture, and some pretty but rather heavy designed flower print draperies at the windows. The next room is where "I se havin' my exhibity", and the third and last room is her kitchen. As Art Galleries go, I suppose this is one of the smaller ones on record, and so far as I know, has been contrived by the only negress in Louisiana who had wares of her own creation to set out that other people of color and white folks would pay two bits to see.

Naturally I am filled with curiosity to know where she picked up "exhibity", but assume the word exhibition has been used possibly as a verb in the past tense in some article appearing in a Natchitoches or New Orleans paper, and someone has read the thing to her, and her new twist to the word is the result.

0188

3811

I have today learned of another primitive painter, also a negress, living in a somewhat remote section of the Little River country. I don't even know her name but have a pretty good idea as to where her cabin is situated and if the current rains ever cease and the side paths and turnrows become passable, I shall drop by to see what is what.

There seemed to be some difference of opinion as to the comparative value of her work as contrasted with Clemence's, some thinking it better, some not. To me, perhaps the most important thing about Clemence's pictures is not their merit as found by the cultivated white person but the fact that they delight the taste of the untutored negro, a person like Peter, for example, who pronounces the highest praise of them by saying:

"One of them things in any house would give the room a lookin' up."

Up and down from Ruskin, no greater criticism of any work of art was ever more satisfactorily set out as fulfilling what ever purpose Art is supposed to do.

A question flashed through my mind as I was writing the above: How is it that, - so far as I know, - women painters never figures in pre-Renaissance or in Renaissance art. Where were all the embryo Rosa Bonheurs, the Vigee-Lebruns and so on. Surely there must have been some, and yet why have I never heard of them. If I weren't already in communication with the Metropolitan on another matter, I would certainly write to inquire when the first primitive appeared under the pencil of a woman.

I wrote the Metropolitan last week about making a survey of the country's paintings of merit with a view to compiling a list, possibly compiled under the names of the respective artists, so that when completed the list would not only give us a comprehensive catalogue of our paintings of merit, but would provide us with the location of each so that anyone interested in a particular school or painter might readily contact existing repositories. I'll bet, for example, there are quite a few portraits by Lyon scattered about the country, and especially in the Gulf States, but I know of the existence of none, save the Father and Son in my boudoir. Possibly the WPA or some such Federal agency has made such a listing, but if not, it seems to me some wealth Foundation or the Metropolitan itself might sponsor such a remarkable catalogue. For a nominal sum, a preliminary listing could be made, county by county and then State by State, with a final check up by a few experts. Ho, hum... so many things to be done.....

gray

rose brick

white

3812

Wednesday, September 14th, 1949.

Memorandum:

And so, as you will note from the attached sample, we have gone in for cutting out paper dollies!

Really, Lestan and his old turkey tail feather fans has nothing on me.

The thought occurred to me the other day that since Tommy is Robina's friend, and is connected with the Pittsburgh Glass Company, there might be found in that quarter some mean of bringing forth an idea which had been buzzing around in my mind for some time.

I touched lightly on the idea of doing something by way of a child's bank, a paper weight, an ash tray or some such, using the African House as the theme or motif. I enclose her response. In tomorrow's post I shall send her a "paper dolly" like the attached one, suggesting she take the matter up with Tommy as to the possibility of using glass, and, if that seemed impracticable, to contact some pottery concern which seem to abound in the Louisiana, Texas and especially the Arkansas area, where the clay is particularly suitable.

At the same time, I asked her to keep in mind that in approaching a manufacturer, it might be well to give the impression that a patent has already been applied for to cover a line of items, called "Historic American Buildings Series". If proper and profitable arrangements could be made, not only the African House would be used in this business, but prominent monuments all over the country, - Mount Vernon, Monticello and so on. At the present writing I am not quite sure just how the idea could be copyrighted or patented, and if they might easily be pirated, but if that hurdle could be surmounted, and one of these gagets could be placed in every American home, and if we could make a dime on each one, a dime times a few million should make the effort worth while.

For ever so long I have wished somebody would make toy banks of places like, say, the White House, or Devereux or the Hermitage, and of milk glass material.

I am sending Robina the drawings of the African House, as issued by the Library of Congress from the Department of Interior specifications, and what with her organization and contacts, perhaps she will turn a trick. In any event, it has been fun cutting out the paper dollies, even though I am no good at it.

3183

3813

The September issue of Talking Books Topics came to hand in today's post. It has more items than usual which I want to read. I immediately asked New Orleans to send me "A Clouded Star" and a book by some author I know not, the book being a detailed account of the expedition of Lewis and Clarke.

In the bracket of things I don't have to read is Mr. Darwin's Origin of the Species, although I am glad it is available for those who like it. Your friend, Mr. Kane, has his Natchez book, - did I say his book, on the disks, too, and there seems to be half a dozen other items which I could take eventually. But I am still devoting my attention to little Marcel, and shall write old Xenophon again tonight, asking once more that Marcel's "In Search of Things Past, or is it Time Past, be put down on records in its entirety. I shall also ask for the millionth time that Children of Strangers be recorded, and I shall hazard the opinion that if the Kane thing on Natchez can be done, so, too, can Saxon's Old Louisiana.

Just to prove that I have no sense at all, and not at all the wiser for my battle with the bees yesterday, I stock my right hand slap in a wasps' nest before breakfast. But thanks to the vast amount of moisture obtaining in these parts, I found mud ready to hand, and so the sting didn't last but a moment, and although my hand is a little swollen, it gives me no trouble at all.

I put Peter to work at Arenbourg this morning with his tractor, disking the drive thoroughly, and thereby eliminating many weeds. I shall collar Fugabou tomorrow to mow the Johnson grass on the terrace, after which we shall first plough it and then disk it before Winter sets in. I am astonished at the growth of things, and the absence of growth in others, but everything looks rugged enough, and next season ought to witness considerable advance and consolidation.

I saw Celeste and Madam Regard for five minutes at coffee time this morning. They reported the house girl failed to come to work this morning, having been on a party last night. At supper, the master told me the servant put in an appearance while the family, with Dr. Alban as guest, were at table. She announced she had married last night and was setting up housekeeping 7 miles up the road in the Bermuda area. Then and there, according to the master, the mistress had a spasm, must to the astonishment, surprise and embarrassment of sedate Dr. Alban. I am forever wondering how people can put on such spectacles of themselves. I believe it is usually charged off to nerves.

And on the plantation front, it didn't rain, a fact worthy of mention. And in the Art world, I obtained the precise reading of Clemence's sign. It is in three lines, and withal brief: "25 cents. Art Exhibity" Thanks.

3814

Thursday, September 15th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Thirty million times would not suffice to tell you how happy I am to have your Sunday letter in today's post, together with the enclosure, both of which are safely tucked away in my armoire, for I did not finish the final page of your letter, and had not run across any reference to the birthday of the Arenbourg children which I assume the enclosure may cover.

I am writing this letter a little earlier than usual, for it isn't first dark as yet. I talked with Dr. Rand on the telephone this noon. He mentioned that Madam Rand and Mrs. Hemingway had already headed toward the Cane River country, and that he expected to join them for supper about sun down, and that they had planned to gather me up as they passed the front gate, so that we all might sup together.

Foreseeing that this might put a crimp in my usual rendezvous with my secretary, I contacted him at the gin and so was able to explore two thirds of your most elegant epistle in daylight, with the hope that sometime between the folding up of the gin along about first dark and the tinkling of the Rand supper bell I may again get back on the usual schedule. But failing that, I shall have the happiness of having already digested your letter in part plus the promise of additional delights on the morrow.

How nice to know that you, too, on that unusually bright Friday night witnessed the same luminary phenomenon that at the same time was enchanting me. I felt so happy and at peace with the world at the time, I like to think that state of bliss was induced by the fact that the glories of God were being shared.

It is certainly ind of you to have taken the trouble to explore the Michaux matter. I am not certain, but am under the impression the volumes I have in mind are issued under Andre's name. Their text is in French and were published in France, as I recall. The color plates were full page, the pages being about the size of the ordinary French novel. This item is not worth searching for at length, but one of those things to be kept filed in the mind, just in case one should unexpectedly stumble over it.

I pause to remark upon the thunder of rain on the great flat banana leaves along my front gallery. I thought we might

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escape the rain today but this season seems determined to play out its program in exactly the opposite of its record for last year at this time.

And may I congratulate you on the discovery of the book on slavery. It sounds ever so interesting and will be a bright edition to the Arenbourg shelves. How much fun it is to gather these "tresors" in anticipation of happy days ahead.

I, too, ran across an item the other day, but not on 4th Avenue. It is a volume about the size of the Gustine volume, and contains no end of typed pages, - scattered particulars, I take it, plus what appears to be a few original documents, and penciled notations by Cousin Cam. The book carries a somewhat vague title, - "Natchitoches", but I gather it may embrace data covering the Parish rather than exclusively the urban angle. I notice a photograph of a lady whom I take to be "Aunt Benjamin" whom Lestan mentioned so frequently in his Diary. This item, too, will find a place on "the holding shelf", don't you think.

I learned from Little King today that he and Mr. Brew went to wake the youth, Willie Dugard, who was killed last Saturday night under curious circumstances. The wake accounts for the failure of my secondary to put in an appearance. Perhaps, too, he suspected there wouldn't be so much fun coming to see me, what with letters, I notice, resting here unopened, on my desk, from The Metropolitan Museum, the Harnesses, Madam Lake, Herr Overdyke, some of Robina's friends, and so on. Wise boy to fade out of the picture under the circumstances.

I like your suggestion that a suitable article be contrived for the Louisiana Historical Journal on the Madam. It would be particularly appropriate if it might be turned out for the November issue but I doubt if I shall get around to it for that date, since I am under the impression their manuscripts go to the printer several months in advance of publication date. Aside from correspondence, I haven't done much on this machine this week, having played hookie by busying myself at gardening up Arenbourg way. Twice I have started wading into the Spring Pilgrimage article, but each time before getting up to my ankles in the thing a passing pilgrim has knocked the thing slap out of commission. I may find time to take another crack at the thing over this week end. One element that has impelled me to mark time is an impression you may express as to the Emma item, and if you think it up to publication standard. One thing I should ever so much like to do, - but of course never shall, - is to get out a photographic thing, about the size of Paris de Nuit, with alternating pages of full photograph and two or three lines of print, using Log and a mule as the two personalities on which a collection of pictures might be strung to illustrate plantation life on Cane River. But I have already reached the end of the page. Arenbourg blesses you in anticipation of a happier birthday in the immediate offing.....

3816

Friday, September 16th, 1949.

Memorandum:

How delicately, how splendidly couched were the terms expressed in the final third of your longer letter, and the other and shorter one which came to hand today.

And may I congratulate you on discovering the letters of Mrs. Henry Adams which, as you suggest, may well round out a very important gap in the "Education" of her husband. It will be nice to think of it as on the "holding shelf" for days to come.

I think you ever so noble to have struggled through the latter part of the "Education" with such fortitude and speed, for in the parts devoted to speculation, I imagine ~~never~~ nearly everyone finds it slow going. But, as you also intimated, the theories scouted in the Virgin and the Dynamo section are stimulating, and further back, his thorough denunciation of the Grant regime, it seems to me, is a masterpiece in devastation, so put down as to give none of the Grant sympathizers at the time it was written the slightest toe-hold in a libel suit. I am sure you got as hearty a laugh as I when you read Mr. H. A.'s account of President Grant's observation that Venice might be quite a place if they ever got it drained.

As for your kind words about Emma, may I say how genuinely appreciative I am of your opinion, so beautifully set down in such an adroit way as to make me want to try again with another in hopes it may please you, too. And how am I to thank you for going into the Harper's business so thoroughly and so generously on my behalf. There is but one saving grace in my heart when I quake a little at the thought of the extra burden I am placing on your time and energy: - the same thought you so delicately expressed in regard to joint operations at Arenbourg, and the thought that in both cases we are sharing a common enthusiasm really pays off in a tremendous dividend of delight.

I hope some publisher may like it, naturally, but so far as I am concerned, my satisfaction is but complete. After all, you find it alright, and if you are pleased, what the rest of the world finds is bound to be but of secondary importance so far as I am concerned.

I want to do the Pilgrim thing next, in quite a different vein from

3188

3817

Emma, something on the vaguely ironic side, perhaps, - and after that I want to try my hand at another Emma type, there are so many ingredients if circumstances but permit me to stir them undisturbed.

Since the Melrose Memoranda has so much space devoted to the weather, perhaps I might set to work doing something on that subject, a matter, in fact, not unlike the importance it played in "rain", since it does have such an all important bearing on the economic, hence all the other aspects, - of plantation life in the Gane River country. And while on the subject, I might as well report that again this evening the heavens opened and the floods descended with an abandon surpassed only by the torrents the fell last mid November. But Saturday is usually "rest day" for cotton pickers, and perhaps the sun and breeze may put things back into some sort of shape before Monday rolls round.

Dr. Rand picked me up last night, and he, with three guests, Madam Rand and I, had a pleasant couple of hours on the gallery over the water. This morning, on returning from Arenbourg, I dropped by the camp, Madam Rand and Mrs. Hemingway having remained over night, and it was pleasant having breakfast with them, as between Yucca and Arenbourg, - or the other way around. They were returning to Alexandria right after lunch, and so I never saw them afterwards. Mrs. Hemingway is 70-ish, thin, white hair and a voice reminding me ever so much of Ethel Barrymore's. Although lacking her sweetness, she reminds me a little of Mrs. Brandon, and a solid foundation of interests makes her an interesting conversationalist.

Little King came to spend his noon hour on the gallery with me. He had lent his boat to someone who hadn't returned it by 12, and as going around by the bridge, - he lives across the river from the store, he thought he might find something to his liking in this secluded corner. And after he had had something to eat, he gave me a message, sent by a mulatto down the river at whose place Little King had called this morning to pick up a load of cotton for the gin. He said the man told him he had some photographs of Grandpere Augustin's brother, and since Grandpere hangs in Yucca, he thought I might like to have the brothers along side. So far as I know, Grandpere had no brothers, and photographs three feet square so rarely seem like ante bellum objects of art, but it is possible the man may have cast off the old painted portraits, - if he has any, under the impression that the photograph is the thing. And so one of these nights when Little King's wife has had her baby and thus is removed the question of impending urgency, Little King will guide me to the house, back from the road and hard by the river, where I shall see what family chromos are extant, and what, if any, if of interest.

And may I think you for news from up and down the Americas, and how things, both on wing and on wheels shape up. I find myself convinced you are so right in assuming things will pan out along the lines desired, and I am ever so glad.....And again my thanks for all...

3188

3818

Sunday, September 18th, 1949.

Memorandum:

I reckon that cold mass of air over Fort Worth which caused la belle Lake to button up her overcoat must still be sitting there, for it has never cooled off at Melrose, and our daily showers continue. Today's downpour at noon was about the hardest I can remember. At sundown tonight it was wonderful to look out across the cotton fields, for the sky had cleared, and the reflection of the after-glow in the heavens was mirrored by the vast sheets of water in the fields, giving an unearthly whiteness to the sagging lint of the plants whose feet were standing in water.

Mrs. Holloman came up with her friend, Mrs. Wells, for the afternoon. They had planned to picnic along the way, but the clouds looked so threatening, they drove straight through, arriving in front of the store just as the clouds burst. There they were marooned, but being supplied with ample food stocks, they spread their picnic inside the car which afforded them a snug little frolic in a world that for the next two hours was nothing but an unending cascade.

I am sorry to say the article has gone to seed, and will never jell, I feel quite sure. Mr. Holloman, with his legal mind, as assisted in rounding out a few points, so that the thing now bristles with legal angles, is dull, and even seems to have lost itself somewhere along the way between the beginning and the end.

I think I could take it apart, discard about half of it and by adding a few paragraphs, make it balanced and coherent. But I have decided I can use much of the material that might thus be added for something I have in mind to do on my own hook, and so I'll let the husband put on the final legal touches, and permit the manuscript to get pigeon-holed where it may.

As for myself I did a few pages on the Pilgrim thing over this week end. As so frequently happens in articles of this type, the thing seems to be taking a course quite different from what I had envisioned when I sat down to do it. I am perhaps half through, and shall be interested to have it read back to me sometime this week to see if it may be something or is merely a lot of trash. In the mean time, and without waiting to see what the initial pages are like, I shall proceed with the balance of what I had in mind to say, and then, if the first part turns out passable, I shall try pasting the two parts together.

My impression, as I try to recall what I have thus far written,

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leads me to believe that it might be a Collier type of thing, and pictures might be employed. But since they already are planning Watchitoches pictures for an article in mid Winter, I doubt if they would want anything from the same neighborhood again right away.

Perhaps it may turn out to be a Reader's Digest type, - although possibly a little too light, but we shall eventually see, and then we can decide.

I dined with the Henrys across the fence this noon. The elements outside were distracting, what with leaks developing in various directions and conversation was dull. But I did hear another episode in the sordid story of the Sam Tobins. It seems the ex-Mrs. Tobin, who married the overseer, Lecasse, now has a baby by her new husband, while the new Mrs. Sam Tobin attempted suicide a night or two ago, - but with indifferent results. First she swallowed enough sleeping pills to effect the job completely, but committed the folly of taking a couple of large drinks of whiskey on top of the pills, and thus some reaction took place, the whiskey somehow lessening the effect of the drugs, bringing the whole business to naught, and Mrs. Sam Tobin to the stomach pump. What an awful disappointment it must be to awaken to discover that not only are you not dead but that you are having to go through the rigors and humiliations of a stomach pump.

Clemence, who through little Miss A.'s persuasion, seems to have renounced Clemence as a name for a former one, - Clementine, passed by to see me on Saturday. We somehow got to going on her genealogy, and I jotted it down as we chatted. It was only a page, double spaced, but it was a-drip with color. Unfortunately I began it in the third person, but half way along, switched it to the first. When circumstances permit, I shall make a transcription from the scrapbook into which I pasted it, for it is amusing in spots. Her acquaintance with some words is such that a measure of redundancy developed when she spoke of an "Irishman man". I must pass that along to Mr. Pipes, for you will agree, he would like it.

The weather or something or other put a crimp in the pilgrimage business which pleased me much, although I did have three or four nice numbers from Kansas, one or two from Oklahoma and a smattering from Louisiana.

At dinner I asked J. H. if the local crop failure, - it didn't rain at drop in Bermuda, by the way, - would send many of our neighbors to the wall before the end of the year. He said the repurcussion usually doesn't register intul the year following, from which I gather it takes a twelfth month for the money, borrowed against the collapse, to be exhausted and the mortgages foreclosed. Another year of grace for the little fellows, and then will come the hay-making season for the big shots, the Henrys, the Jones and so on....

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3820

Monday, September 19th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The weather remains the main topic of conversation, but I don't know why, since there doesn't seem anything new about it. This afternoon we had another downpour. The Yaegers were here, bringing the doctor's twin brother of Atlantic City and the latter's New York wife with them. After the tour, they took off their shoes and stockings to wade to their car.

Naturally the gin remained silent today, what with no cotton picked in the last several days. I reckon the same silence will obtain for days at just the time everything should be going full blast. Some people could remember a drought similar to last summer's, but no one seems to recall anything comparable to this year's damps.

What with my radio out of whack again, I got around to do a little rading last night. Reluctantly I finished Swann's Way, and packaged it up for returning to the library, but something tells me I shall be sending for it again before long. And last night before folding up, I read a few pages from "Within The Hollow Crown" by Barnes, - a story of Richard II, or should I write 2nd, for he certainly wasn't the 11th. It seems to be a well written histotireal thing, and for all I know is well grounded in the lore of the time it treats, but somehow, except for the philosophical little Marcel, I find my interest in novels sagging, - or don't I, since, on second thought, I still find Tolstoy and Dostievski attractive enough. Probably what I recall want is to have people who do vast research into historical fields devoted their findings and energies to writing biographies and histories, for I suppose if the present volume appeared under a title of "A Life of ~~Ham~~ Richard the Second" I would probably like it. and in equal probability only two people, much after the manner of you and me, might read or even glance at such a title while thousands may be intrigued by the novel with a hollow crown title.

And while on the subject of printed material, you may enjoy turning through the current, - October, I suppose, issue of Holliday. It has an article in it about South Louisiana, resulting from the visit of the Northern Editors down this way last Spring. If this be a straw in the wind, we may look for a Cane River ariltice before too long in some other publication, I suppose. The Holliday article spurred me on with the Pilgrim article, and I have just written Mr. Edgar of The Saturday Evening Post regarding the matter, the duplicate letter, dated tomorrow, being attached herewith.

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The Holliday article about South Louisiana is by H. Basso, I believe. I think one Macready, - or some such name, may be mentioned in the article, or figure in the illustrations. He is Basso's sister's husband, and they were guests of the Betty Regard Couragerers last Sugar Festival time, and will be there this year. I understand when Celeste goes to New Iberia on October 1st for the dancing in the streets, parades, dinners and so on. It makes me tired to think about it while Celeste is impatient for the hour to come when she can take off.

What with plantation work at a standstill, a flock of my friends came to see me this afternoon, gracing my back gallery when the Yaegers arrived. The Dark Duke says his wife and child are back from the maternity hospital and are doing alright. He spoke of the child's name, and in characteristic humor remarked that although the child is a week old, he still doesn't know its name, for although he told them at the hospital what to enter it on the birth certificate, none of them seemed to know how to spell it, and as yet the proud papa hadn't discovered what they really did put down. Ezra gave my radio a once over but couldn't discover the short, while Will Rodgers took the opportunity his leisure afforded to repair a couple of chairs requiring his expert chraftmanship. Clyde Claude Emmett Davis, Bluff, Peter, Murrel, and Heaven knows who aal rounded out the group. After a five minute chat with them, I resumed whaling away at some stuff on my typewriter which was the merrier as labor, what with the gaiety seeping in from the gallery.

One of the Little River boys spoke to me of the baby skunk he "is fixin'" to bring me but keeps forgetting. I declare some of those youths have the best forgettors I ever ran into, - for both Saturday and Sunday Mr. Brew forgot, he declares, to come by to run through the mail with me while Ezra to whom I had given the keys to the front and side gates at Arenbourg, has forgotten what he did with them, and Will Rodgers never has remembered to bring me my shoes he had taken to repair. Probably I had better just charge off the shoes, for if, in reality, he hasn't worn them out, they probably have just about perished anyhow, what with all the dampness of the past season. You will enjoy Mary Rhodes' letter. Her determination to write in spite of all her handicaps is little short of heroic. In view of what she has done in short stories, it would seem she might turn out something worth while with the present plot. Happily I am able to write her of an actuality that transpired on a plantation between Alexandria and Cheneyville, - two mulatto children by a bachelor brought up by his two maiden sisters who, on their death willed the plantation to the girls who, on their death, willed it not to their colored kinsmen but to nephews or cousins of their white father, the latter never having had anything to do with them, which was "turning the other cheek" if ever there was such a thing. Poor Mary, I hope she gets a Rosenwald or a Guggenheim, and I recommend she try both, for of all people she is one for whom such insitutions were made to disperse money.

3822

Tuesday, September 20th, 1949.

Memorandum:

How nice, how nice, how nice.....

Your two perfectly elegant letters of Thursday and Friday in this morning's post, along with the several enclosures, plus the "My Boss" item under separate cover. I know not where to start saying Thanks.

But before saying anything else, let me thank you for using such excellent judgement in handling the Emma matter. Everything you did was perfect and the elegantly appearing duplicate of the story itself is going slap into a scrapbook on the page opposite to the one carrying a photograph of the Kinsey oil of Emma herself.

As today's post was rather heavy, I did not get around as yet to run through the enclosures and the item coming by second class mail, but it is good to have them to hand, for probably tomorrow's post will be light and the perfect opportunity will present itself.

Of the individual items you mentioned from the current news, all were hot off the griddle. Of course I was glad to have particulars from afar as well as from the family hearth, of Zita's daughter and her nuptials at the home of Xavier de Bourbon Parma, as well as the departure of Alphonso in the new Ford. The latter event means an easing of domestic pressure a little, I hope, and may there not be too many holidays in the current school year for your sake.

The weather is so fine today, I have felt a vast impulse to do a billion things. The day dawned cloudless and a marvelous blue has obtained all day, flooded with sunshine, and the whole business tempered by a brisk breeze from the North East, deliciously cool and drying. I haven't accomplished half I wanted to, of course, but the gobs of ozone did impell me to do considerable floundering around on this keyboard. Obviously the subject of pilgrims has got me all tangled up. I have written the first two pages 7 times over, and it still doesn't suit me. My problem is to get the article under full steam at the very beginning without seeming to be trying to get some publisher to give Melrose some free advertising. You and the Lord both know I am not fishing for more pilgrims but I seem to have difficulty by the enumeration of claims to public interest in the piece yet not giving the impression it is some kind of a "come-on" business. Tomorrow I shall try to finish the balance of the article roughly, and perhaps I can entice Ora down to help me untangle the thing before long.

3823

Ora is helpful and has intelligent suggestions, and what is more remarkable, she doesn't mind if I demur. For example, she suggested that I might begin the Emma thing with the sentence: "On the Walls of the African Househangs a portrait of Emma". I think that would have been one good way to begin, but it would have required too much fixing in the subsequent paragraphs. Besides, as she pointed out, that particular sentence coming where it does, seems to break the story a little. I think it does. That is why I put it there, - to introduce or suggest a lapse of time, as between what had gone before and what following in the abrupt conclusion. But I didn't explain that to her, but merely said I preferred to leave it the way it was.

As I wrote the above paragraph, an idea occurred to me. As you know, I write these Memoranda with you only in mind, and never with a view to publication. Still there is a possibility that at some time some of the pages, if properly gone over and altered, might provide material that for magazine or volume might be strung out, scattered about or batched together under some such title as A Melrose Memorandum, or some such.

I accordingly suggest that if, during the course of a year, you should find one page or another that might be of wider interest than as between you and me, you might check this or that page, or jot down the date so that if we should ever want to explore some of the excerpts with a view to possible publication, we wouldn't have to wade through entire masses of trivia.

A possibility I foresee, - and it is remote, is that public taste follow parallel paths down through the years, plantation life on Melrose might eventually provide material in a considerably altered pattern but nevertheless suggestive of the articles Archibald Rutledge used to do for the Saturday Evening Post. It was with that embryo idea in the back of my mind the I wrote that publication yesterday, feeling that should, by some miracle, the Post be interested in doing a Pilgrimage thing, they might more readily be receptive to subsequent articles, and that is largely, I guess, why I am having a gummed up time with the first couple of pages of the current article, since I am not only trying to sell the present article, but and more broadly trying to throw in the idea that there is additional material that might be forthcoming.

From the enclosure, I take it the Georgetown butterfly lilies aren't coming into flower, - surely it is too far North for them, - but it was kind of her to write for no reason at all. I got a great kick out of the laundry when it came back to me today. I have been wearing a pair of shoes that were too large for me and so I have filled them more perfectly by wearing two pairs of socks instead of one at a time. I tossed them in the laundry without separating the two, and today they came back perfectly washed, but still one sock within another, just as they had gone.....

3824

Wednesday, September 21st, 1949.

Memorandum:

Yesterday's fair weather didn't hold very long. Today, with the advent of autumn, - officially at least, the same old summer weather program remained. It drizzled this afternoon and tonight imposing rain clouds and a 100 per cent humidity suggest further showers before morning. Cotton at Melrose continues sagging while at Arenbourg everything is perking madly.

You will find the enclosure good reading, especially the news about Bob Tallant's impending opus, if, indeed, you haven't already seen the reviews. Frankly, I had expected a little more about the paper dolly I had sent the other day, but perhaps there isn't anything to be said until after Tommy and Nat have considered the matter and Rudolph has stirred up some kind of a model. I laugh to myself when I recall I wrote two pages of suggestions concerning contacts with various poetry concerns. I gather I must have been singing psalms to a dead mule again.

Luck was on my side today in that there were few passers by to take up time. Accordingly I not only got a good airing at Arenbourg but also whacked off quite a lot of stuff on this machine. I should hate to have to confess how many times I did the first page of the Pilgrim thing over, but in the end succeeded in making it come out precisely as I wanted it. When I am done with the Knipmayers tomorrow, I shall concentrate of the balance of the thing and about the end of the week telephone Ora to see if I can entice her down for a first rough reading. Then all that will remain is to get the thing right and sit back and wait for the rejection slips.

Mrs. Coombs dropped in for a few minutes this afternoon. She has burned her right arm rather painfully with hot grease, and is wearing an imposing bandage. She wanted to ask if the new Reading Machine is going along alright, and to tell me that her son is writing a story about the old Bullard mansion which used to stand where the center of the college in town is today. It seems I mentioned something about the fluted column in the white garden to him when he was done this way two or three months ago, and remarkable to say, he remembered it as having figured in our conversations about the old Bullard place, and so decided to do the story in response to a school requirement for an essay on something about the college. I found a little snapshot of the column and his mother thought he would be tickled.

3825

This morning, along about 10 o'clock, a little episode unrolled on my back gallery for which I was totally unprepared.

Usually between ten and 12 I work out there. Sometimes Murrell, if he is working around in the neighborhood, drops by, not so much for the charm of my society, I suspect, as for the stray chance there might be a Coca-Cola and possibly a ham sandwich floating about.

Murrell is a black youth of perhaps 18 or 20 summers. He went to school until he had learned to read and write a little, when he had to quit because his shiftless father wouldn't work to support his wife, - Murrell's step-mother, and the three or four children by this second marriage.

Murrell sometimes helps me with my mail if my usual secretary gets lost in life's daily tussle. Yesterday he helped me with your letter covering various aspects of the Emma matter. When we had finished, he asked many details about the way books are written, how they get published and so on.

This morning Murrell came back. The truck on which he was working as a helper, had stopped to weigh up some cotton in the fields. We found a Coca Cola and he helped me run through Robina's letter.

When we were finished he said:

"Last night I went to the show at the honkey tonk and it was dark dark when I got home and to bed. But you know I couldn't go to sleep, too busy studyin' about that book writin' things we was talkin' about yesterday. And after I had studied quite a while I thought of somethin' and I wants to axe you about it. What you think about a story bein' writ and called 'The Man Melrose Loved'."

I said:

"I think that's a swell name for a story, and everybody loves Mr. J. H., and a heap of people would like to read about him."

The sound of the truck starting up deifted in through the bamboo hedge. Murrell got up and said he reckoned he' better be going.

On reaching the edge of the gallery, however, he hesitated a moment, and then, half turning back, said:

"I don't want to do a lot of book writin' Mr. J. H. is a fine man alright and I sure do like him. But I'm nothin' but a no-sense nigger and I ain't got but one story to tell."

His voice broke. He stifled a sob: "All I wants to write is 'The Man Who Love Melrose, I mean the Man Melrose Loved, and I don't want to write it about nobody but you."

I glanced down at the mail, shuffled some papers about, and looked up. But Murrell had fled.

3826

Thursday, September 22nd, 1949.

Memorandum:

In spite of predictions to the contrary, today was marvelously clear, but the North East breeze continues to blow South Westwardly toward the hurricane center that continues to stew over the Gulf. But the storm seems to be loosing its strength as it increases its speed, having fallen from 60 to 50 miles per hour in wind velocity as it picked up a mile from 4 to 5 in its progress toward the coast. I reckon it will be spent before it reaches us on Saturday.

The knipmeyers came this morning, bringing little news of interest. The Doctor did tell me about an elaborate account of a flower that the Spreveport Times went into paragraphs of print in describing. He said that after years of contriving, someone in the Shreveport area had at last succeeded in persuading an elephant ear to produce a blossom. He said it is light yellow in color and suggests a calla lily in shape, but the stamen is six or 8 inches in length, and the petal almost a foot, being one of the longest known petals, not unlike a Jack-in-the-pulpit type of blossom. He talked at length about the unique appearance of the flower, marveling that after all these years one had actually come into being, and regretting sincerely in inability to get to Shreveport to view it.

He nearly fell out with enchantment when, on leaving, I pointed out six blossoms that had just unfolded on the edge of my front gallery.

Mrs. Holloman and a photographer came this afternoon. We ran through the story for the last time. It would be alright for something like The National Geographic, perhaps, which uses its own staff writers, but lacks verve for a more popular periodical. She generously had included my name in the by line. I asked her to drop me out of it. Should the thing ever reach print, you will recognize some of my paragraphs easily enough. As for the ending, I couldn't ever find one, so anybody can claim it who stumbles over it.

I am not quite sure just how the photographer happened to come along for apparently Mrs. Holloman had no work for him. But since he was here I thought I would have him take a few shots which might be of use later, especially if the Post should be interested in the Pilgrim thing. We got one of the big house which he thought would turn out nicely, and one of the African house, which may or may not be worth while, and one of Yucca which at best is a perhaps. I also secured a dusky face

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to appear at the iron bars of the African House, which, should the Emma story ever be used as a medium for plantation photographs, might be good to caption: "Log found himself in jail, charged with murder, on the day Emma died". I also asked him to do a flashlight of an interior of the African House, with Little King pouring nothing out of a big jug into an empty pot. What that may be used for, I haven't the slightest idea, but perhaps you might have some elaborate formula to cover the non-existent fluid spilling from jug to jar.

At noon I spoke long distance with Dr. Rand. He said Mrs. Rand was still sleeping at the hospital, after having all her teeth from the upper jaw extracted this morning. If she will only have the good sense to relax completely during this ordeal, I remarked as much to Dr. Rand who countered by saying:

"If my memory is any good, you remind me of the priest I once heard addressing his congregation with this admonition: 'Don't do as I do, but do as I say'".

Dr. Rand is a sight. The local planters are all sending trucks to town to haul cotton pickers each morning at dawn. Last year, the trucks were spilling over with young, old and middle aged folks. Last year the impulse was to get as much cotton as possible picked before Spring caught up with the harvest and a new planting season would force them to plough under the bulging bowls. This year the race seems to be to gather up what little sage seriously between bowl and mud puddle before the next shower knocks what little there is onto the ground. But the city pickers don't seem to be over enthusiastic about the prospect of finding enough lint to pick to make their day worth while. As opposed to last year's truck loads of perhaps 40 or 50 souls, a Melrose truck this morning hauled down 7; Magnolia 4 and Hyman Cohen 1. That surely doesn't sound as though the game were worth the gas.

I read a page or two from The Hollow Crown last night, and was impressed by a remark that in Richard 2nd's time people had to depend upon what churchmen told them was in the Bible, but that eventually the time might come when men might read and Bibles might be available for all. To most readers of those lines, such an aspect of life must seem something out of the Dark Ages. I bestirred my brain to see if I could think of more than two of my friends of color on Melrose could read a line, and I couldn't. Somehow I was reminded of what Mr. Roosevelt used to say, when the microphones were cut off, following a Fireside Chat: "How am I doing.".....

3828

Friday, September 23rd, 1949.

Memorandum:

Another marvelous day, and the Gulf storm must have lost itself somewhere along the coast.

I was at the store when the postman arrived this morning, and noting the envelope from the American Mercury, with slip attached, concluded it was a rejection, and so I enclosed a bit more plantation stationary, sealed the thing up again, and got it going along with the same post.

About a year ago, the Reader's Digest was casting about for original material, but I don't know if they are still in the market. Your suggestion as to Coronet as a possibility sounds good too. How would it be to try Coronet first and then the Reader's Digest, unless some other likely publication should come to your attention.

If Colliers and the Post say No to the pilgrim thing, currently brewing, one or the other of the of the Coronet type might be worth a try. The pilgrim thing will probably be a little more than twice as long as the Emma one. I am having difficulty in holding it down for in the beginning, at least, it seems as though quality is what is most important. How well do I recall how Brad used to say after he had become established that a lot of the stuff he did for the magazines weren't worth any body's time to run through. But that, of course, was after he had firmly established his extensive following and his name would impell his enthusiasts to read anything under his signature.

I think I mentioned the old Meziere desk a week or two ago, - the one that is earmarked for the descendants of St. Denis's son-in-law. It popped up in a conversation today quite unexpectedly.

Just before supper, Celeste's friend, Mrs. Mat. Hertzog, drove in for a little call on Madam Regard just as I was passing the gate. She stopped to chat with me for a moment, and while thus engaged, we were joined by Celeste who had just driven in from town. She said she had seen Mrs. Murphy at the Meziere residence as she passed, and had stopped to chat with her for a moment. I had recommended the Meziere sale to Mrs. Murphy by letter and she had apparently acted on my suggestion. But where the surprise came was Celeste's remark that while Mrs. Murphy had purchased some things to her liking, she wasn't able to purchase "Francois' desk". She said that de Meziere, pere, had spoken to her and Mrs. Murphy about it,

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declining to sell it on the grounds that it was mine. He had told me when I saw it that he was retaining it for the children, and it was the nicest piece in the house. I applauded his intention, and so, naturally, never inquired about a price, since it definitely was not for sale. Now I find myself wondering if the man thinks I am going to purchase it, or if that was merely his way of denying sale of the thing to the ladies by saying it was reserved for me. You may well imagine how astonished I was when Celeste quite casually mentioned "Francois' desk", and I the more so because I had never even mentioned to her that I had ever been to see the Meziere things.

Following the Knipmeyer visit yesterday, news about the blossoms on the elephant ears traveled fast. I assume some mention of their presences at Yucca must have been made in town last night, since nobody else had seen them. Be that as it may, I had a long distance call from Southwestern College of Lafayette, La., this morning, inquiring if it really could be true that I had not one but two flowers. By chance I had been working around them before breakfast and had actually counted 14. The college departmental head came back at me that the telephone connection was poor and that he had understood me to say there were 14. I didn't want the man to faint then and there and so I assured him there were only a baker's dozen. He came back at me a second time, saying that he didn't want to start any argument, but he felt sure the connection was still bad or that I had made a mistake. I agreed, a mistake by 1. He then asked if he might see them if he took a plane up to Natchitoches on Saturday where two or three professors there would like to drive him to. I suggested the hour of 10 for the morrow, and I must arrange to have a supply of smelling salts handy, for late this evening I discovered two more blossoms unfolding. If Caroline Dornon were not such a poor correspondent, I might acquaint her with the phenomenon, but, on second thought, that might not be wise either, for should "ole Virginie" chance to be reading my letter aloud to Caroline while on the highway, the latter might do another "asa rubrah" and land them all in the ditch.

Clemence brought me her sketch for the scrapbook this afternoon. She said the postman, seeing her sign, after reading about her work in the paper, dropped in to view her exhibit. She said he expressed himself as never having before realized before that anything like it ever transpired in Louisiana. She seemed tickled, and doubly so when I told her that I had seen him afterwards and that he had told me that that was the best investment he had ever made, paying the entrance fee of two bits.

I talked with Dr. Rand this morning. Mrs. Rand was still in the hospital but is doing alright and plans to come up to the camp Sunday. I wish it were Monday, there are so many things I want to start doing.

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Sunday, September 25th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Perfect weather, so perfect in fact that passing pilgrims today kept right on going and never did attempt crashing the front gate. The thermometer is in tune with the calendar, with noon day readings around 80 and mid night drops to 55 or 60.

Saturday was all blue and gold, too, making it a fine day for the botanists to breeze in, examine the flora, make notations, photograph, pinch, squeeze and finally to accept a plant, bearing two stalks in bud and leaves on stems 8 feet in length. I'll bet the thing looked like a last year's bird's nest before they got back to home base, but they left here brimming over with enchantment, and since they thought their jaunt worth while, I was happy, too.

Contrary to expectations, the Rands apparently didn't get up this way today. And in a way, perhaps it was just as well, since they usually have Puny and Zelma to help out when they are here, and probably neither would have been present.

Friday night Peter's auntie died, Victoria's youngest sister. She lived up the Bermuda Road a piece, somewhere between Sammy Balthazar's and St. Mathew's, being, among other things, a convenient place for local residents to attend the wake, held Saturday night. I haven't had a full report on the festivities as yet, although to judge from appearances when a couple of tendrils from my grapevine tapped at my casement window this morning just before dawn, I reckon, in spite of the cloudless sky, everything must have been fairly well afloat. I didn't inquire, but I assume the weekly ceremonies at the honkey-tonk probably got things well underway before midnight, and from then on all the black coffees, usually served at the home of the deceased, could scarcely be expected to straighten up the waving sea of humanity that undoubtedly congregated about the bier.

They were "fixin' to deposit the body" at three o'clock this evening, and I haven't seen a soul all day, except for two or three friends, passing this way tonight

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about first dark, who had come up from the Little River area, and hadn't heard anything about local doings since last Sunday night.

I think I finished the pilgrim article this afternoon, but what with the manifold interruptions breaking in on its composition during the past week, it must be an almost hopeless hodge-podge of paragraphs that will tax anybody's imagination to string together in some sort of coherence. I shall telephone Ora in the morning and see if she can't come down to play a bit of solitaire with me sometime this week. If it seems to make any sense and we have time to make some corrections, I shall try to get it put into some kind of sequence and post the thing to you when it is less disjointed. I reckon that will not be before another week has elapsed, at least, for it is possible Ora will not be able to get down before next Saturday.

I blush when I think of the broad hints I have dropped to Celeste about lending me her eyes for half an hour, but the social whirl is going full tilt and a costume has to be contrived for dancing in the streets in New Iberia next Saturday night and so on and so forth. And in the mean time, here I sit, playing "Patience on a tombstone, smiling at Grief", and turning over in my mind what next I want to take a whack at on my old Underwood. After a while I would get some sense, - or so anybody would think.

But between typewriter and scrapbook this afternoon, I had an ever so pleasant interlude which was in the nature of a complete surprise. I had held your recent 2nd class parcel, assuing it was the installment, "My Boss" which you had recently mentioned, when, to my surprise, on opening it, I discovered it to be the issue of Holliday, devoted to The Hudson. I had a grand time turning through it, recognizing old familiar places, and reveling in the grand photographs of Hyde Park. It is certainly a moving collection of pictures, and the vacant wheel chair is as thrilling a story in picture form as I have ever witnessed. I was sitting on the white garden gallery as I turned through the pages and somehow I experienced one of those sensations which crop up so infrequently when I am happy, for it almost seemed to me I wasn't alone at all but was in reality sharing my pleasure with the one who had made that half hour possible.

The New Orleans Public Library, in response to my request for the Lewis and Clarke thing and "A Clouded Star" sent me instead The Way of All Flesh. And so I continue with The Hollow Crown which is too heavy for fiction and too light for history. But mine has been a quiet, happy week end and may you be able to say as much for yourself, you who did so much to make mine so.....

3832

Monday, September 26th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Monday is usually the quietest day of the week, and for cotton picking time, it was unusually so today, for the weather was perfect and what with no cotton on hand to bale, every mother's son, - and daughter, - was busy snatching at the lint in the fields.

I telephoned Ora tonight, and will put the scattered paragraphs of the Pilgrim thing in the mail for her on the morrow. She can see if she can patch the paragraphs together into some sort of sequence and then sometime or other come down and run through it with me. As someone once indelicately expressed such arrangements: - "There are so many different ways to skin a cat."

I was interested in news concerning Hot Wells which Ora passed along. R. B.'s mother, who is about the Madam's age, has had lots of trouble with a leg for a number of years, and during the past twelfth month, it hasn't healed, and this in spite of the best physicians available. Ten days ago they took her to Hot Wells for the baths, and by the 9th day, the thing had healed completely.

Hot Wells is between here and Alexandria, perhaps 6 or 8 miles North of Alexandria. For years experts have said the properties of its water was comparable if not equal to or even superior to those at Hot Springs, Arkansas. A few years ago the State purchased the place and built a bath house or two, and from its opening, it seems to have brought remarkable cures while at the same time providing an opportunity for people living in central Louisiana to make daily visits, as did Mrs. Williams, without having to stay in the place, as would be the case, of course, if they had to journey so far away as Arkansas.

The Post Office for Hot Wells, I believe, is the adjacent little town of Boyce which was built on the plantation of one Michael Boyce, husband of Lucinda Robiaux, the sister of old Joe Henry's wife, Ossite Robiaux, the mother of John H. Henry, Sr.

You will find the enclosure interesting. From it, I gather Robina isn't much interested in the ceramic idea I advanced some week or two ago, thinking she might like to handle the negotiations with some manufacturer in the Shreveport neighborhood. I shall write her tonight, asking her to let me know if present engagement impell her to concentrate of matters already

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confronting her, and if she would prefer to have me delegate Nat to handle the thing.

I was interested to learn Dr. Miller had written Robina about the Insurance thing. Did I mention before to you that Dr. Miller had written me three letters, all arriving in the same post, the second correcting the first, and the third the second, regarding the time she had been engaged in binding books at Melrose. The final correction placed her at Melrose under Mr. Babb's supervision in 1941 and the ensuing 18 months, whereas, as I remember but too well, with the outbreak of hostilities, Madam Moore joined the U. S. Army, and Dr. Miller took over the Moore vacancy as Secretary of the Natchez Garden Club. Either Dr. Miller by herself or jointly with Robina, got their calendar in complete confusion, but I don't see as it makes a particle of difference if Mr. Babb's good sense will prevent him from needlessly upsetting the red taped appalcart.

I saw Madam Regard this morning. She said there were few mulatto ladies in attendance at Sunday evening Vespers, as all were busily engaged at the Convent in preparing and canning pears. It wasn't quite clear to me why the job had to be done on Sunday, but I might not have comprehended had she explained. It seems that a huge fruit crop in Oregon and Washington this season impelled, - according to Madam Regard, somebody or other to send oceans of fruit all over the country, - gratis, and that a truck from Natchitoches deposited 13 crates of pears at St. Augustin's, distribution being made to religious institutions only. I have no idea how much it might cost to send a few carloads of pears from Washington to Natchitoches, but I should imagine the sum would be imposing. It is wonderful that the fruit thus reaches institutions that can use it, - instead of being thrown away or left to rot on the ground, as so often has happened any place in the nation where the bumper crop hasn't warranted harvesting. But I still don't understand the details of the thing, such as who shouldered the express bills, why the stuff had to be canned on Sunday and so on. Nor do I care.

I got in a few good licks at Arenbourg this morning. The native persimmons are loosing their leaves but the orientals still hold on to theirs. The same situation obtains everywhere. I brought home another armful of big old white lilies that incline majestically here on my desk before me as I whale away at this keyboard. There perfume is almost too heavy, and what with the barrage of sweeter aromas wading in through the screen door on my front gallery, I am almost ready to swoon with delight.

Three interruptions during this conversation has made a mare's nest of this memo. Perhaps tomorrow we shall have a better break.....

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ESTATE OF JOHN H. HENRY, SR.

MERCHANT AND PLANTER

J. H. HENRY, AGENT

MELROSE, LA.

PHONE 4901 NATCHITOCHE, LA.

Tuesday, September 27th, 1949.

Memorandum:

I apologize for the funny paper, but it seems to be the only thing I have in the house at the moment.

Another marvelous day, and some more good licks in at Arenbourg in the dawn's early light. The ozone is so invograting these days that I find weed slaying less a labor than a luxury, and I returned to Yucca an hour later than usual, all a-drip with sweat and covered with beggar lice, and withal fairly satisfied with an early morning work out.

A tractor-trailer, collecting cotton, had brushed under a pecane between Arenbourg and Yucca, leaving a great strand of lint caught in one of the lower branches. Somehow it seemed to be hanging there solely for my convenience, and accordingly I clutched at it without stopping, and so provided myself with the best known medium for removing beggar lice and the like, the cotton passing over any garment to which such stick-tights are attached, relinquishing them instantly as the cotton brushes over them.

Today's pilgrims included some delightful people from Nashville and others from South Louisiana. The latter spoke of some interesting letters they have, written to the father of one of the men by General Lee when the gentleman, as a young man withdrew from the Institute of which General Lee was the pPresident, in the years following the Civil War. They also have a complete journal kept during the war, and offered to let me explore it if I cared to, but I declined, having no opportunity to revel in such a delight until some later sitting, but I did appreciate their kindness.

Both the Nashville and South Louisiana ladies, it turned out, were graduates of Sophie Newcomb College, and by chance referred to their beloved head of that institution, who of course, was none other than Dr. Butler, so that we found a common enthusiasm from that point forward.

I am sorry to report that one of my cats dropped out of sight on Saturday. She was an expectant mother and this prolonged absence leads me to fear she developed some grave maternity problem and did not survive the ordeal of child brith. Our relations have always been peculiar, for she never

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MERCHANT AND PLANTER

MELROSE, LA.

J. H. HENRY, JR.

has maintained the constancy of affection that always prevails, as between Grandpa and me. The variation fluctuates between indifference to positive coldness, until the day the lady become pregnant, when Lo! she suddenly begins mothering me with such persistence that it is almost impossible for me to sit down for a second that she isn't draping a fur piece, consisting of her own tummy, about my shoulders, tucking herself about my feet to keep them warm and only a canine or feline Divinity had conjure up what next this little creature will think up to display her maternal concern for my happiness. This goes on for about 6 weeks, or however long it takes to have kittens, whereupon, after the old stork has deposited them, I am again abruptly ingored and snubbed from day to day until such time as biological impulses inaugurate another season of pregnancy and I am again taken under her wing for a six weeks period of smothering. I hope she is alright in her present concerns, but it does seem as though she has absented herself over long.

The enclosure from Miss Nellie hold much I should like to know more about. I suppose the old Mr. Winston she mentioned is my friend who lived at Routhland, and was as fine a person as I ever knew. The Robert Baker, of Church Hill, of course, is the old friend of Mr. Johnston, who as a youth was so often the guest of Jefferson at Monticello.

Miss Inez Montgomery is Mary Lambin's "Aunt Nez", sister of Mary's mother. They owned Hope Farm until the Balfour Millers persuaded them to exchange it for a little no account house in Natchez, which was one of the skin flint deals of the pre Pilgrimage period.

Some 6 o'clock pilgrims, tonight came from Dallas, former acquaintances of Rudolph in Denton. I had a great time with them, for although they came directly from the Purdhommes here, and so had been pulling around on Ile Brevelle all afternoon, they couldn't ever figure out where that island was that Lyle talked about in Children of Strangers. I guess they had envisioned some little hunk of land, completely surrounded by water, and not a geographic unit and a state of mind that was determined in part by Cane River on one side and Bayou Brevelle on the other, stretching for ten or fifteen miles along the banks of these two water ways, one of which is so insignificant, - the Bayou, that one could leap across it in many places. I think they left still unconvinced that they had ever been on Ile Brevelle in spite of my pedantic explanations of the phenomenon.....

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Wednesday, September 28th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The marvelous weather continues.

The Times Picayune telephoned this afternoon. It seems their Magazine Section is published a month before release, and November stuff must accordingly be in by October. They thought the Melrose synopsis of sufficient interest to merit an article, - not the mulatto thing already completed for another publication by la Holloman, but the Melrose Memorial thing I had recommended to their attention for November publication.

I pointed out that I should prefer the Holloman name attached to the article rather than mine, and that I would communicate with her directly. Of course she never knew the Madam, and I doubt if she ever heard of her before the 17th of last month.

And so I spoke with her over the telephone and she leaped at the opportunity to make another round up this way early next week. In the mean time I shall outline, and possibly fill in the main paragraphs of the article, and I reckon the whole thing will be sufficiently limited in space as to require but a comparatively brief sketch. If the thing is accepted, after we have pasted it together, and if it is actually published in November, the time of its appearance should be perfect, so far as my wishes are concerned, for while it will have a wide reading because of the Picayune circulation, it will be read at a time when there are comparatively few road runners, which will suit me to a T. Then, too, if I can contrive to remain wholly out of the picture, the pulling and hauling about which will be inevitable, once the thing appears, will leave me outside much of the excitement.

Then, too, if my name doesn't appear as the author, the thing will have a much better chance of making the hurdle of the Editor's desk, for whenever anything is written by someone who lives on a Louisiana plantation, the Picayune Editor always blue pencils half of it on the assumption the writer is trying to drum up a little tourist trade, and the Lord knows he would be in error on that point but even though convinced, he well might throw out precisely what I most wanted to put over.

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Today's post was fairly interesting, although none of it of any primary importance. I shall respond to Mary Rhodes' letter shortly, approving her noble endeavors, but striking at one point which I think should be started in on before long, and she might as well be up in front. My point will revolve around how she finishes of the character of the father of the white and the mulatto children. I shall point out that a mulatto child always has to stagger under a double stigma, aside from the fact she is not a legitimate offspring. The first, of course, is her color, and the second, - and one which no one ever seems to have recognized, - or at least set down in print, and that is that because a child is mulatto, it automatically is assumed that one of its parents, - or both, - were bags, which, I presume, name not always be true. What with all the fuss people make about inheriting character from parents, the mulatto child encounters a handicap merely by being born. I shall suggest to Mary that she have the father turn out to be a fairly nice person after all, even though his sex impulses in his youth got him into racial tangles. To tell the truth I don't know as I know anyone who ever begot a mulatto child, but I assume that if for no other reason that the law of averages, there must have been some quite civilized people who begot them because of one circumstance or another, quite aside from the mere biological impulse.

If such an assumption could once be established in the public mind, it seems to me that much of the stigma always fastened on the poor child would automatically be removed, and Mary's mulatto character would have a much easier time of it as she wrestled with the other problems which will face her in playing out the role Mary contemplates for her.

And after all the writing I did last night about my inconstant feline companion, she actually came up for air after her prolonged absence, and as thin as a rail. She has followed me about all day, cooing like a dove but doesn't seem to eat anything I set out for her. I am wondering about the offspring now, but I shall not sit up nights over them.

And this morning I learned that last night Maybelle's solidier husband, discharged from the Army, returned from the wars. How this will effect the domestic arrangements which Maybelle has maintained with Peter all this time, I can scarcely guess. I hope there will be no murders on Saturday night. But such problems are forever taking unexpected twists, and it isn't beyond the realm of possibility that what in other menages might turn out in a rumpus, this one may so adjust itself so that all three may keep the impending winter home fires burning the brighter together. One never can anticipate solutions in the cabins.

And here, as yet, I haven't talked anything much about Taffy, but there will be time for that on the morrow.....

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Thursday, September 29th, 1949.

Memorandum:

A priest, a poll cat, a physician and his spouse, - so ran the circle of my morning callers.

But to state the matter a little more correctly, the poll cat wasn't really a caller, since he is Taffy, a member of this household.

A while back I told Peter I was adding a new poll cat to the list of furred and feathered friends who frolic on my gallery, and Peter's reaction was skeptical. He said:

"I don't know if I am going to like that new poll skunk or not. To tell you the truth, I don't think I'm going to have much confidence in him."

But after I had assured him that the little fellow was bereft of his sack of attar of roses, or whatever it is styled, his fears vanished and now he plays with him as though they had always been old college friends.

There is nothing special about Taffy. He is about four months old, is black, save for a stripe down his head which separates into a V at his neck and gets lost somewhere near his two front legs. My friend, Taffy, the negro hunter in the Little River-Red River area who is supposed to have brought me one, hasn't done so as yet, and so I am naming the present one in Taffy's honor. I feed him any old kind of scraps from the table and he adores milk, which my cats don't seem to care much for, and so it is just a great big Jack Sprat affair, and cats and skunk hit it off like peas in a pod.

Father Gaubert, or some such name, came to see me from St. Augustin's. He is a nice person from Philadelphia and I like him. The Knipmeyers were much as usual, but had little news of interest. But everything ran along nicely and if there were any tendency to lapse, the animal section filled in everything that might so much as suggest a gap.

There seems to be distress in the house next door tonight. The Evangeline costume, ordered from New Orleans, and said to have been shipped Tuesday, did not come to hand in today's post. The ladies had planned to take off for South Louisiana early

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in the morning, but the absence of the costume forestalls that plan, - hope being what it is, - that the item might come through in tomorrow's mail which will not arrive here much before 9. Of course there wouldn't be any point in dancing in the streets on Saturday night if one weren't suitably Mardi Gras-ed, and so the world looks dark indeed tonight.

If I may use the same expression, I hereby express the hope there may be no "dancing in the streets" at Melrose over the week end. What with the weather being so fine, although a little cool, and the promise for fair weather for the week end, I foresee the possibility of many a road-runner, and while I can manage them alright, I am hoping the family wont blow in for a frolic, especially the Shreveport contingent.

It is said the thermoment will slide down to 47 tonight, and I believe it, for it is already cool-ish, with a brilliant First Quarter moon impelling me to want to get into the big road. I think I shall make a little round to Arenbourg and back, after which I shall inaugurate the opening of the Fall season by switching from ice to hot Tender Leaf on my return.

Last night I heard most of the Capitol Gloakroom program, with Senator Smith of Maine as the guest. I like her radio personality and am sorry I don't know something about the lady. I sometimes forget to tune in on the program, and sometimes when I do remember, I am frightened by what I hear, what with the astonishing display of colossal ignorance one sometimes hears, spilled out by numbskull Representatives and Senators, obviously of the poorest political grade, but a couple of appearances by people like the Senator from Maine and one is somehow reassured about democratic procedure.

For some reason which I haven't been able to figure out, the Guernsey or Ascension lilies at Arenbourg seem to be holding their magenta-pink coloring longer than the Melrose ones. Each year they usually reach their finest period of coloring on the 21st of September, after which, within four or five days, the sun begins to fade them appreciably. Those in the great elipse around the African House have well passed their prime, but those at Arenbourg continue to hold, although there is more shade at Melrose for their protection. I shall watch both places to see which begins putting up its leaves first, for, as you know, the leaves appear only after the flower has sent up its gay, tangled blossoms. We have a few yellow ones in both Arenbourg and Melrose but they never seem to multiply, although I am experimenting with them to see if I can't do something about that. The yellow seems to catch everyone's eye, for it is quite rare and seldom seen except in botanical gardens. But I must break off and take a little turn in the big road to see how the world looks from our terranxe.

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Friday, September 30th, 1949.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter in this morning's post, and thanks much for enclosing the clipping covering the new head of the American Foundation for the Blind. In the last Talking Books Topics, there was a farewell address by the retiring head, but at the time the recording was made, no successor had been named. I have written a note to Dr. Irwin on his retirement and now, thanks to your thoughtfulness, I shall have an opportunity to write to the incoming executive.

Your letter was so elegant in every detail that I know not where to begin thanking you. I am especially appreciative of your efforts in acquainting me with what is going on in the literary section; the pertinent facts regarding old Eudora and current trends, both in the new publications and the trends in the older established ones.

My sales letter to the Post obviously didn't strike the proper chord, although I must say I was a little taken aback that they said No without seeing the manuscript. Perhaps they thought it might cause a controversy, since it frankly was set forth as something from a single viewpoint, and being a little on the conservative side, - or at least it used to be, perhaps they wanted to see nothing that might jar anybody into a laugh, assuming the article might contain one.

At least we saved the time and postage of sending an unwanted article. Since you are so generous as to offer putting the pilgrim thing into shape, - if and when I get it pasted together, I shall send it along eventually, and after you have skimmed through it, you may judge for yourself if it be up to publication quality, and if so, what current publication it seems to fit in with, so far as the present trend goes. I can't imagine The Post using the Holloman thing, and if they don't, we might be able to use the pictures recently taken at the time that article was being stirred up for use in some other publication, although it is quite possible that an organ like Colliers or Coronet might have their own photographers in this area. I might add that the Colliers photographer did not come here with James Aswell, - the second attempt at getting pictures, although I know the man, the second selection, and he did take pictures here at the time the visiting Northern Editors were here in March.

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I was perfectly entranced to learn all the interesting details about skunks which you included in your letter. I had never heard of any of them, and am of course entranced at the prospect of Taffy taking poor old Dora's place along side when I journey daily to Arenbourg. And the fact that skunks area ~~is~~ adept at finishing off bees leads me to think Taffy might well take over the wasp section, too. Parthenetically, I know you will be as delighted as I when you learn that in the absence of my usual secretary, Murrell was running through the mail with me today, and even as Clemence with her "exhibity", so Murrell put an extra syllable into the wasp's nest, making it read "waspie".

And while in that parenthetical department, I would add two things as they occur to me, one in regard to local dialect, which is that ever so frequently in the same sentence a word will be used correctly, say as a noun, then made up out of whole cloth as a verb or an adverb, and then, - and still in the same sentence, incorrectly used both as subject and verb, - correct once, created with seeming correctness in the verb, and then slap on top of it, incorrectly used in the balance of the sentence.

And the other thing is the local tendency, often with charming surprise, using or adding a "ee" or a "y", as in the "exhibity". It doesn't seem so strange when youngsters indulge in this whimsy, but it is arresting when a stalwart son of the soil, rugged and with no nonsense about him, refers to having trouble with "my tee-fies". That you have had another round with "neighbors beyond the Gulf" was depressing. Will those people ever stop traveling, and stay put, somewhere other than Manhattan. In view of their purpose for the overseas jaunt, it is amusing that the pound should have been scuttled just about the time they were heading out toward the capitol of the Empire.

I was enormously impressed by the coincidence of the two lines which began the two stories, both written without the writers' knowledge of the other's intention or doings. And speaking of Emma reminds me that I received a couple of proofs from the photographer today of the two or three shots I asked him to take with a view to possibly using them sometime in connection with Emma in picture form. The one to illustrate, "Log found himself in jail" is a most striking composition, - the cracked blank brick wall of the African House, absolutely nothing save a window, perhaps a foot square, with a black face peeping out, and black hands clutching at the iron bars, with only an elegant great oil jar just beneath the window. It is really elegant.

But here we are at the end of the Memo, and just getting started. But I shall burden you with more in my next....

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ESTATE OF JOHN H. HENRY, SR.

MERCHANT AND PLANTER

J. H. HENRY, AGENT

MELROSE, LA.

PHONE 4901 NATCHITOCHES, LA.

Sunday, October 2nd, 1949.

Memorandum:

Fair and warm Saturday,; fair with drizzling rain today, and it has been a quiet week end in which I have accomplished little, unless rest and relaxation can be squeezed in under the line as attainments.

Robina telephoned Saturday morning to say she would pass this way for a few minutes in the afternoon. She came with two ladies who were charming, but their presence afforded little opportunity for any exchange of confidences. One thing was chalked up on the positive side, however, for in the Bindery, settled down behind the coping of an old armoire, we discovered the long lost hand cotton gin. That, if nothing else, must have mase the trip worth while.

The ladies remained but an hour, and while there were other pilgrims later, they weren't of any special interest.

This morning about 11, Mrs. Rand dropped in and I was of course delighted to see her. She invited me to dine with them at the camp where I found the doctor busy at the barbecue pit, doing a side of beef. Later Ed Rand and Horace and their mother brought me home, for they had to take a look at Taffy, whereupon Mrs. Rand expressed the opinion that I had failed to receive a scorching letter about skunks which she had posted to me on Friday, and which I shall probably receive tomorrow. Laughingly she said she was so glad to have come to see me today since I shall probably never let her come back after I have received her note.

Over the week end I heard two mildly humorous episodes that I pass along, not for the quality of merriment but merely because they are a part of Cane River legend.

In this morning's sermon, the Reverend Brown of St. Mary's varied his usual preaching program by reading to his congregation from some book or other purporting to be The Bible. He admonished his listeners to pay strict attention, for he intended asking for answers to questions about points touched on his reading when he had concluded. Accordingt my informant, who probably got it a little mixed up in the telling, the preacher related the story of one Lazarus who was a rich man but lost his money. Finally he got so poor all he had to eat was crumbs from the rich man's table, and then, getting sick, he even had to stay flattened out in the ditch and moreover, a dog was the only one to nurse him and he came and licked his soars:...

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Or perhaps the word is sore. Be that as it may, the preacher, having concluded his story, turned to the congregation for some answers, and the first one propounded was

"What was the dog's name what licked ole Lazarus".

He called on two or three, but none could tell. Then he called on a fourth pillar of the church who seemed unusually bright eyed and alert.

"Could the dog's name be Rover?" the preacher was asked.

"No, not Rover, but that answer shows you been paying good attention," was the Rev. Brown's response. "If you reads the book careful like again, you'll see the dog's name wont Rover, but the Good Book do say it was 'Mo-rover'".

So much for religion, and the other is about conjugal fidelity. The other day an old man in his 92nd year crept into the Welfare Office. Being already on their assistance rolls, they were surprised when he announced that he had come for additional aid, - and the more astonished were the office force within ear shot when the oldster announced that it wasn't to have his own check increased but merely to collect ~~wxx~~ what was due him because of the advent of a child in his dependent family. In response for particulars, he announced that he was the proud father, but just a shade of doubt passed over his face when some skepticism was expressed by one of the Welfare staff.

The old man explained:

"You sees, about a year or two ago, I marries a lady what was 60 or 70 years yonger than me. I'm gettin' so old, my wife say my memory ain't no account. To tell you 'se the truth, I can't ever remember getting that child, but my wife, she say it sure enough is mine alright, 'cause she got her good rememberin', and so all that's left for me to do is to take the thing on faith."

Surely Faith, as a mover of mountains is wonderful, but how much greater is it when it inclines one to accept parenthood of a child he cannot for the life of him remember having sired.

This afternoon I growned out the bulk of the Picayune article which isn't much to my liking but perhaps I shall be able to perk it up a little when Mrs. Holloman passes this way on Tuesday. My lack of satisfaction with it recalled a couple of lines from Dorsey's "Why We Behave Like Human Beings, which I have been reading. "There is nothing in this world like brains", and "For some people the skull is but a frame for their features", - and I blush that the coat fits so well for my form today....

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Monday, October 3rd, 1949.

Memorandum:

To hand your elegant letter of Wednesday. Mr. Brew went to Monroe, La., today to bring home a new car for the Estate, but Murrell passed this way before supper, and so I was able to have my little chat with you then. I am sorry I was unable to respond immediately, for half the subjects you touched upon will undoubtedly elude me, but they will return from time to time, and I shall refer to various points in days to come.

You ask about Robina's line of labor. She and Miss Nell Fish have for years operated what is listed in the telephone book, I believe, as The Letter Shop. They do secretarial work of all types, except, oddly enough, stenography. I reckon much of their business revolves about form letters and the like, although I know they do take regular correspondence, too, although I never did figure out just how that was done. I know nothing about their clientel, although I recall some mention of the pressure of business when to normal routine such drives as membership to the Little Theatre and the like make their rounds.

I know nothing about the income they enjoy from this business, although I imagine it is sufficient to defray their living expenses. Miss Fish has money of her own, I believe, and during the past half dozen years had inherited substantial sums, I believe, possibly a fortune. But somehow that doesn't seem to alter devotion to the business, and rarely does either partner take time out for a vacation. I believe each sticks to a two week vacation some time during the year, and that is all. I think Robina does not have anything to compare with Miss Fish financially, although she does own her home, which she shares with a sister, and possibly they rent an apartment in a section of the house they don't occupy themselves. Neither the Madam nor I ever saw Robina's home although I have been to her office a couple of times, a two room suite like any other office anywhere in a large building.

It was certainly thoughtful of you to mention Madam Lake's birthday, as of Nov. 11th. I didn't know anyth ng about it, but am delighted to have the date for I should ever so much like to write her a special note at that time.

I am certainly sorry for you that Bedlam reigns constantly in the Madison Avenue and 57th Street neighborhood, for I can think of nothing so enervating that the constant racket that attends the wrecking and building of Manhattan skyscrapers. And if memory serves, we all assisted on the side lines for the Radio City construction and heaven knows, that should have been enough to have lasted any one a life time.

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I saw Celeste for a few minutes this morning. The dancing in the streets was wonderful and the millions of people she met tickled her to death, or thereabouts. Her former sister-in-law's husband is President of the Sugar Festival, and as New Iberia is in the heart of the Cajun country, it will be nice to pass along Mr. and Mrs. Harness to Herr Courager and some of the others I am acquainted with in that region, for I am sure their assistance in effecting a pleasant visit for the Harnesses will please the latter ever so much. Today is J. H.'s birthday and tomorrow Madam Regards, and half of South Louisiana is coming to dinner. I am glad la Holloman is scheduled to come here a little after noon tomorrow, for that will give me an excellent excuse to leave the Regards to their own devices.

Totally dissatisfied with the work I had done yesterday, I decided, after writing you last night, to take another whack at it, and tossed off a dozen pages or so that ran along as readily as water down hill. Today's post was rather heavy and so I haven't had the thing read back to me, but I believe it is alright this time. I shall give it to la Holloman tomorrow, but ask that she return the working sheets to me, for if something should go wrong with the Playune project, I might be able to use the present draft for another publication.

As you know, I am doing the article exclusively with a view to having it read by the boys, and I got what I wanted to say in the first two paragraphs. They might take time out to read that much. If I hadn't been so indifferent about the balance of the thing, I suppose it would have become gummed up at the outset, but instead of that it rattled along to a conclusion just like one, two, three.

In reference to the enclosures, Ora is talking about the pilgrim thing, of course. How kind of Mr. Harness to remember me just before leaving for his outing. Strangely enough, a pen knife is what I have been wanting for ever so long, and one of ironwood will suit me to a T. I used to use a dagger that came down to me from Comte Frontenac but so many of my intimate friends of color who find daggers or butcher knives so convenient on Saturday nights were, it was obvious, so tempted to appropriate it on week ends that I put the thing away until such time as I can have my desk some place other than where I entertain my friends.

And thanks so much for telling me of the contents of the Quentin Reynolds article. It sounds so menacing, doesn't it. Cane River land is so difficult to obtain I reckon it would be almost impossible to effect a similar pattern in this particular area, but I am delighted to know about the system, and one never knows what seed will germinate, after it has been planted in the minds of some of my local acquaintances. So many things to chat about...Your letter has meant so much to me.....

3846

Tuesday, October 4th, 1949.

Memorandum: We had lots of weather today, - but all of the same persuasion. At six this morning, following a night of rain, the weather man said the hurricane would be passing West of Houston before noon and that winds and weather of the dampish type would be plentiful in this neighborhood. He was right. But there was nothing especially impressive about any of it. During the mornings' onslaughts, the winds were from the North East, blowing toward the storm center, I suppose, and during the afternoon and tonight, they are from the West, away from the storm center, I suppose. The rain has been steady but not torrential, and the wind, while brisk enough to shred the banana leaves, hasn't torn anything apart, so far as I know. The thermometer reading has remained in the 70's all day, and so, except for the 100 per cent humidity, the temperature hasn't been anything to complain about.

Two parcels went forward in today's out-going mail, a tiny one for Quantness and a more cumbersome one for you. I mention it that you may be fore-warned. Each package contained some persimmons, but yours had a little more bulk to it than the one for Peaceable Street. I guess the package for you may be a foot and a half square, and will therefore probably will be cumbersome. Only the address on the outside wrapper will reveal its source of origin, so if it is handier to tear that off and say it came from Ashville, or some such place, nothing should reveal its actual starting point. Perhaps the package will reach you by Saturday, and I hope the persimmons will not have ripened into a mess before then. If they haven't ripened at all, they will do shortly. Another item or two in the same package, like the persimmons, will be found to have been wrapped in a particularly unattractive way. I might have done better, but probably would not, had time not been quite so pressing. I mention that they are in separate bags, so that if you decide it is easier to eat them separately, and so avoid the bulk of the outside box, you may throw the other in any old trash can and possibly be able to navigate with reduced balast to your own comfort.

In spite of the weather, a flock of Madam Regard's relatives from Mansura came to spend the day. I think they are all very kindly people and they dress with unusual smartness, play cards like the experts they are, and, so far as I can discover, haven't a brain in their neat little heads. I gave them a tour, - at their request, - in spite of the rain, but if ever I sang psalms to dead mules, today was the day.

3847

As Madam Beaumont would put it: "Lo!"

My philandering secretary blew in as between this page and the foregoing. I sat on most of the mail but did have him put in a new ribbon, as you see. And first off, may I thank you for the big envelope that came today, containing, as I have just discovered, a copy of the Southern Fireside, which I shall explore at another sitting, plus the elegant letters or rather envelopes which will be of the greatest service to me on occasion. I certainly do appreciate your thoughtfulness and shall probably express myself in another way by pushing transcriptions in your direction in some of them eventually.

There was also a little note from Miss Nellie, referring to my poor sight and hearing, so I take it the hearing aid she mentioned recently must of been for herself. The letter contained much reference to Smith Coffee Daniels of Fort Gibson and his interest in various historical aspects of that region, and especially things about old Josiah Hale, and so I shall send that letter to Dr. Rand, since it was on his behalf that I made the inquiry, and he will be able to handle the matter of contact more readily perhaps if I send the letter to him rather than trying to get the thing dictated to me by my elusive secretariat.

I guess the enclosures are of no especial interest, although it is good to hear from the lady doctor whom I haven't seen for months, - before her jaunt to Massachusetts, - while the note from Rudolph indicates I might be out of order, were I to ask him to metamorphose the paper dolly into clay at the present moment when he seems so busy. Or perhaps he isn't but merely is thinking himself so when contemplating his neglected correspondence. Perhaps he might like an excuse to forget his "must stuff", using a tangle in mud pies as an excuse for getting out of other demands by local people on his time.

I trust you will forgive me for returning to the matter of the item included in today's package, but it occurs to me that if and when you get time to turn through it, you might find some of the data, - I know no none of the contents, - of interest and bearing on the Jane River section, and, if memory serves, it seems to me Aunt Benjamin's letter may be included in this volume, a truly splendid piece of literature, the Aunt Benjamin (Metoyer) being the same who appears in The Diary of the Young Gentleman of Fashion who lived on the plantation now occupied by the Robins. But what I started to say, but got lost in the doing, - it might not be a bad idea if any pages strike you as of merit to note them in the front or back of the volume, for possibly we might have occasion to refer to various topics on occasion. But, please, please, don't let such an effort be a burden, for the book is for your enjoyment primarily.

Mrs. Helleman didn't appear, because of the storm, I suppose. I shall scuffle with her on the morrow, probably. So many things to talk about, but I'm thankful for this little chat.....

3848

Wednesday, October 5th, 1949.

Memorandum:

May I call your attention, - if, indeed, you have not already anticipated the call, - to the enclosures from my birthday camera.

I have a feeling that local artisans have not done justice to the pictures I have taken. Many films have not been developed with sufficient clarity that I can make much out of them, and some haven't come out at all.

But the ones inclosed seem to be of sufficient promise to lead me to believe some other finisher might have better luck. If you are of like mind, and would care to have one made for me, I should be glad if they would try the one of Log and Peter, printing it in a little larger size, say 6 by 8, or whatever that approximate dimension is, for if it does come out a little more clearly, I should be glad to have one for my scrapbook. I leave it to your own excellent judgement, however, as to whether or not the present print suggests it might merit another printing.

Personally, I can't make much out of the lilies, but with some imagination and your bright eyes, you may be able to envision them a little.

And in an accompanying envelope, I am sending today's letter from Dr. Overdyke, together with an attached Will of Grandpere, - in French, which I was unable to get read to me. I wonder if sometime you might be able to toss the thing over into English, - making the translation as rough or as fine as you please and as pressure of other demands allow, so that I may discover the main legatees. He died in 1856, - December, if I remember correctly, which accounts for the 1857 probate. It occurs to me that when translated, and, if single spaced, the English version might go on a single page, and that it might not be a bad idea to paste the same on one of the blank pages of the item coming to your true hand in the persimmon package. I have a poor photograph of Grandpere's tomb, and I shall attach this English version to the page in the scrapbook where the photograph is pasted.

But, and I pray you be guided by this, please don't undertake any of this at the present moment. I have no need for any of it and if it is accomplished this year or next, it is all the same. I felt, however, you would be interested in having the transcript, and if you keep it on file for years before returning, it will be perfectly alright.

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What I intended to say was that a synopsis in English, rather than a translation, would be sufficient, just so long as the names of the people appearing in the will were mentioned. I would remark in passing that I have always found it interesting that official documents in French were still considered acceptable for the public record, as is demonstrated in this will, half a century and more following the acquisition of Louisiana by the United States. I must ask R. B. Williams or somebody if French is still accepted in such documents. It would be interesting to know how many other countries allowed another language to be used in official or legal documents half a century after the country had passed from a people speaking one tongue to that speaking another.

Mrs. Helloman telephoned this morning, saying she is passing this way tomorrow. With the Knipmeyers in the morning and her with whatever party she brings in the afternoon, the day should be fairly full. I hope Ora doesn't decide to surprise me with the pilgrim thing either in the morning or afternoon.

I saw Celeste and Madam Regard this morning for five minutes. They seemed enchanted with the way yesterday's birthday party went off. I believe there were 22 South Louisiana numbers present. Madam Regard said that next to seeing her people, the thing which pleased her most was the number of messages she received from lots of people most of whom she little supposed had any idea it was her birthday. She mentioned Charles and Ida, Kate Perkins and so on. H u m m m m.

I took time out to read a page or two from the Dorsey book before folding up my beard last night and learned quite a few things I didn't know, and in fact had never thought of before. For example that water, whether in liquid or ice form moderated cold climates. It seems that since ice, once formed, never gets any colder, so that large bodies of it, as in the Arctic and Antarctic, keeps the colder air at a more moderate temperature. Carried to the ultimate, one would find himself warmer at the North Pole by sitting on a cake of ice than he would were none present, which off hand certainly seems odd, don't you think so. What good such knowledge would do anyone, I wouldn't be able to say, but as Dorsey is the only thing to hand at the moment, may as Dorsey do I read.

I talked with Mrs. Rand on the telephone, asking her to inquire at Alexandria printers on quantity price of post cards. Sometimes certain buildings seem more important to their owners if seen on such a medium, and although it doesn't know it yet, the plantation is about to invest in a few cards, don't you think so.....

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Thursday, October 6th, 1949.

Memorandum:

There's a lovely moon gilding the banana leaves on the South gallery and creating a shaft and circle of snow of the sun dial in the "White Garden to the North."

But it is warm, so warm in fact, that it seems to have taken all the starch out of me and so, instead of traveling to Arenbourg before folding up my beard, I shall merely sit with Grandpa and Taffy for a while on the gallery and think of many a happy thought before journeying on to the Land of Dreams.

Last night I wanted to hear Capitol Creakroom and got all rigged up to do so when the current failed. Some negro youth "borrow" the truck belonging to the mulatto for whom he toils, and proceeding to get high, ran said truck slap into a telephone pole just beyond the Melrose garden, cutting off said pole a foot above the ground with as much neatness as a hot knifemight have slid through a column of custard. The miracle is that neither was the boy crushed by truck or falling timber or electrocuted by the maze of wire through which had staggered from the wreck. The electricity was restored this morning about 10.

And while on the subject of failing current, it is rather remarkable that a month or so ago when an airplane out the high tension wire along here somewhere, the aviator never realized he had encountered anything, and after dusting the cotton he was intent on sprinkling at the time, he flew back to Natchitoches and landed without, until getting out of the machine, did he realize he was dragging about 800 feet of the power line with him.

Well, so much for local aspects of Rural Electrification.

The Knipmeyers came and contributed nothing to the sum total of Parish gossip, although their little visit was pleasant and I was glad to chat with them for half an hour between jumps.

J. H. appears to be in New Orleans doing something about pecanese, just as though there were going to be a crop, and my Mr. Brew with Little King, Ezra and Bookle left out for Monroe, La., this morning early to bring home new cars for somebody or other, "us-es", possibly, but most certainly not for themselves.

What with everything at a standstill, following the Tuesday

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rains, the whole population is foot-loose and on a swivel. And so at noon Peter and Log and Murrel passed this way, and the Dark Duke filled in a few side lights on the domestic and financial difficulties of one A. Balthazar who is Sammy's cousin and owns a piece of property up the road, inherited from his ante bellum ancestors. A. Balthazar has little sense, a wife with an equal deficiency, and half a dozen children, ranging from 30 to 3 years in age, each as bereft of good sense. How they have held on to their property as long as they have, everyone wonders. During the prolonged damp season, Melrose store did not keep ordinary cheese in stock. A. Balthazar likes it ever so much and so took to the habit of journeying down to Cloutierville to purchase himself a slab every now and then. Mr. McCoy, owner of the store, and successful, skin-flint, self made hill billy, was lavish with credit, so that by the end of the summer, A. Balthazar found himself confronted with a statement for cheese to the tune of 1,100.00, which for a single summer's eating, seems slightly on the fantastic side. But Mr. McCoy, hearing the A. Balthazar was short of funds, demanded immediate payment, and was on the point of taking over the Balthazar acres when J. H. was appealed to, and of course paid the bill, with proper notes, you may be sure, from A. Balthazar. And so A. Balthazar and family will continue in their home of a life time, and gently but definitely, the expanding boundary of the Estate of J. H. Henry will move outward a step further. Surely the failure of the cotton crop squeezes the little fellow and fattens the big one, but there is solace in knowing the squeeze will be painless, at least.

And then, before my noon day callers had sped on their way, Mrs. Holloman arrived, bring a dishy pilgrim with her, which was certainly a help. We contended with one article, two articles, pasting and patching and dragging in stuff from dictation I had given a month ago, and so on, and finally they headed back for Alexandria, with strictest instructions that my name should not appear anywhere in the article, and leaving me filled with nothing save Hope, - hope that all this confusion and scramble may in the end be worth the energy expended in my effort to sell Melrose to those who already own it, yet know it not.

Well, Lord, Lord! I guess it must have been those stupid people from town who came to supper that got me going on a minor key. But tomorrows dawn will be as delectable as tonight's moon-glow, and a brisk work out at Arenbourg before breakfast will see me all "sot" for a new day. So sorry I forgot to thank you and say how much I should enjoy seeing the picture of the Congo building you mentioned.....

What with everything at a standstill, following the weather

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The whole pile would have vanished from the earth before such a sum as required would be available.

Friday, October 7th, 1949.

to executive tactful hint of being expressed by the fact that the whole pile would have vanished from the earth before such a sum as required would be available.

Memorandum: How nice to find your grand letter in this morning's post. I have read two thirds of it at tonight's sitting, and shall have the balance to look forward to on the morrow. And I don't mind saying I could gladly have murdered the belated pilgrims, blowing in after first dark, who gave an opening for my secretary to escape before you and I had finished our chat.

I think we had not quite finished the section regarding Anita's letter. Poor caged bird. I fear that particular set up will never be very satisfactory. And without knowing anything about it, my guess is that it has two props under it that will never be very substantial, - the family and the husband. There may be no relationship between the current difficulty and the recent vacation, but somehow I feel there may be. I think in America things would never have reached such a pitch, but once that pitch has been reached in the surroundings in which she finds herself, it is doubtful I guess, if it ever returns to a more permanent harmony, although I have no doubt there may be occasional gleams of sunshine, and perhaps that will afford enough rays of hope to make every attempt to bridge over increasing gaps.

How sweet of her to envision a journey down this way some time. How ardently I hope this thought may be realized. At the moment the child poses a problem, of course, but eventually that will be solved and then, perhaps, she will feel up to striking out to expand in an atmosphere so much more conducive to her happiness. I shall have more to say in regard to this aspect of things when I have completed the portion of your letter dealing with it.

And may I thank you for giving me the details covered by the Picayune article about Belle Grove. I saw the picture in the magazine section at Celeste's and asked her for the paper but she wanted to save it until the next day so J. H. might look at it. I asked for it on the following day and of course it couldn't be found. But you have supplied me with all the details and I gasp at the suggestion of turning Belle Grove into a dude plantation. I suppose the idea was that this might be some way to accumulate money enough to restore the elegant old mansion, but how anyone could ever be found to operate the place disinterestedly enough to make the thing pay, and when one thinks of how long it would take to get enough funds to even start the project, one cannot but conclude that

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the whole pile would have vanished from the earth before such a sum as required would be available.

I was tremendously impressed by this latest evidence of your remarkable memory, - that you should have recalled that the Madam and I visited the place in 1940. But then I am always and forever being surprised on that score. Unquestionably the place was one of the loveliest in the South, and having speculated much with Lyle about the old home, I almost feel as though I can picture it in its hey-day when the Stone Wares lived there and Lyle used to go to the races on the plantation with his mother. I reckon I have often remarked upon the story of Mrs. Stone Ware appearing at the races in her elegant phaeton, wearing a huge picture hat, heavily draped in a thick veil, caught tight at the back of her neck, and so contrived to cover her whole face down to below her chin that one could recognize her only by the elegance of her equipage. And how the servant appeared bearing a cocktail on a silver tray, which Madam Ware drank through her veil without removing the fancy bow with which it was knotted, and how, - and every so ill-advisedly, she brought forth a cigarette holder, a foot long, and lighted the same with vast non-chalance, - and nearly choked to death when, on exhaling, the smoke all lingered within the veil which eventually had to be ripped off unceremoniously (unceremoniously) by the servant.

From the enclosure you will find a point or two of interest, and the mention of Jimmy Aswell recalls Rosalyn's thought, as expressed over the telephone to me, that magazines welcome the reading of manuscripts, especially by new writers, which seems to have been proven by the letter from The Post, declining to read the one mentioned to them in a communication I sent them. I am still a little puzzled that they should say "No" before the thing was even submitted, but perhaps they have more manuscripts on hand than they know what to do with.

I laughed at myself today when writing four or five sentence blurbs, describing the scenes on the several post cards I am contemplating. I had so concentrated my mind during the past couple of days on the Picayune article, always taking care not to mention the word negro or mulatto, that I automatically began side-stepping the words for the cards, which, after all, will be printed with any words my fancy cares to set down. If a couple of days could give me such a mental twist, I am wondering how solidly the mind would have jelled, had I been in some European set up during a ten year stretch when so many "Hush-hush" subjects forced everyone to think twice before saying anything.

Rain is promised for the week end, and I am as happy as a clam at such a prospect. I have a couple of things stewing in my brain, and I think I shall be able to get at least one down on paper.

3854

Sunday, October 9th, 1949.

Memorandum:

A quiet week end, with rains on Saturday and a high humidity today. I learned from the "Orsey book that some called sun strokes or heat prostrations were more numerous from cloudy humid weather than from the sun's rays if the air is fairly dry, which was news to me, but in view of local conditions, I can well enough imagine as being true.

And while I think of it, I heard on one of those quiz programs the other night that the words revolving around the cotton gin, the process of ginning, etc., all came from the world engine, which degenerated from the original in some sentence like "Going to the cotton engine" to "Going to the cotton gin". And this may be true but I doubt it, since the combination of words "cotton gin" originated, I believe, long before a steam engine was introduced, what with horse power having been the only motive power used in early days at a time when the word "gin" was generally used.

On the same program I was surprised to learn that the treaty which gave America its independence was signed in Paris. It certainly was styled the Treaty of Paris, but the room I used to know in the old Bourbon Office of Foreign Affairs where the signatures were affixed was in Versailles, on the street running along the front of the place on the way to the Parc aux Cerfs. I don't see as any of this matters in the slightest, although being interested in the derivation of words, I am curious about the gin business.

I had half expected Helen Baldwin this week end, but assume the torrential rains over that way discouraged her party, if it actually had contemplated making a round. There was a chance, too, I thought that the Nat Allen-Tommy Dunstford crowd might pass this way prior that Ora might make a round. But only nondescript pilgrims passed and not many of them.

Last night I folded up my beard at 8 o'clock, what with a fairly active day at gardening both at Arenbourg and Melrose, and I slept like a top. I was delighted to discover an oak which I thought though lost on the terrace at Arenbourg looking as big as life and twice as natural. It has been in the center of the Johnson Grass skirmishes for so long that I gathered it had fallen a casualty to my avenging cutter or to the tractor, but I find it has survived all, and now that I have set an iron pipe along side it, I reckon it is likely to make a go of it from here on out. It is still quite small, only a few feet tall, but once it gets started, it will probably climb along with increased speed.

3855

In my reading, I ran across a gay couplet that was new to me. It was quoted to illustrate how one thing hinges on another, and various influences actually stem from many another that may have periodically preceded the one first claiming one's attention. Her is the jingle:

"Those little fleas who us do tease

Have other fleas who bite 'em;

And those, in turn have other fleas,

And so ad infinitum."

Well, so much for such tomfoolery.

And now that the baseball season has terminated with the Yankees finishing off the Dodgers, I turn my attention to a domestic race which promises to come out a draw. My errant secretary took his wife to the hospital yesterday, - or at least to Alexandria, where she will be within reach of a hospital, now what with old Mr. Stork supposedly just in the offing. And this morning Little King passed by to say he was taking his wife to Alexandria today, what with the same impending event for the solomons as the Brews, - and just in the offing.

From where I sit, my guess is that Mr. Brew's heir will touch home plate first, so to speak, but at the same time, I have a feeling the the Solomon offsprings may run up a score greater than the Brews, so it will be difficult to decide which friend is the winner, - if any. According to report, Madam Solomon is supporting an imposing displacement, and since Little King is a twin and his grandfather is a twin, and twins are said to follow on the male side of the family, it would seem there might be a more than one little Solomon screaming for air before so very long.

Only recently have I learned there are a number of displaced persons in and around Natchitoches, and I am bound to investigate how they are faring. I try to envision what it would be like if some of the people who have spent all their lives here were suddenly uprooted and placed in a similar situation on some other continent. I understand a physician and his wife, in their 40's, are in town. Celeste told me that the wife, a trained nurse, was assisting at the hospital and the Dr. Coombs had secured a place for the husband, who has lately been employed at the air port, with the new position having something to do with the physicals training section of the Army College. I must ask Mrs. Coombs about this the next time she is down this way. I learned of another family on a plantation in the Bermuda, working for Jerry Pratt, who is the world's worst hill billy and that case I must investigate especially. I'm so good at minding other people's business, - But if I can't set them straight, I can at least invite some of them to spend a day at Melrose, and perhaps such a little outing might afford them a little relaxation. I think I shall withhold invitations to the President of the college until after I have extended a little hospitality in this other direction, don't you think so.....

3856

Monday, October 10th, 1949.
Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter of Tuesday with its enclosure in this Monday morning's post, together with the larger envelope, containing the host of manila envelopes which I feel certain I shall find much use for, both for mailing purposes and for housing "tresors".

From the attached carbon copy, you will judge that I acted immediately upon the information you so thoughtfully sent regarding the New Orleans museum. Perhaps through this medium, some kind of a listing of Louisiana paintings may be effected. So much can be accomplished in such matters if but one single solitary organization can be discovered that is interested, and let us hope you found that one in the clipping.

If a response come from the New Orleans institution that suggests a sympathetic impulse to cooperate, I shall forward a questionnaire that may be placed in the hands of all owners of paintings of distinction, covering name of painter, subject of painting, date of painting, original owner, subsequent ownership, present owner and a place for the one filling out the paper to indicate other person or persons whom they know who may have paintings.

One surprising thing such a survey will show, - and something few people will suspect, is the fact that scattered around through the State of Louisiana will be paintings of distinction that have found their way here from other regions, and frequently the portraits, I guess, will be of people prominent in other States or countries. One case in point is the portraits in Alexandria from the Shields family of Natchez, which include the portrait of General Devereux, painted at Devereux, when the General was a guest of the St. John Elliots, while in the Feliciana parishes there are portraits of distinguished Virginians of the Colonial period, brought South by members of the family, and now all but forgotten.

Thanks to your thoughtfulness and industry in this matter, there may be quite an up-swing in what knowledge the State possesses of its treasures, and, should this transpire, you will be the one most instrumental in getting the ball rolling.

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Beau Mack came by this morning early to cut my hair. Among other subjects he touched on was the fact that only one or twice all summer has he seen a snake and concluded they must be dying out from this region. At noon, when passing to the west side of the big house a nasty old moccasin, as though in indicate they haven't all withdrawn, put in an appearance slap in my path. I kicked him out of the way, and then thinking a better one was twice as good as a live one, I called to "Attie to bring me a spade that stood by the kitchen door, for while I couldn't see him, I figured he was probably in a clump of weeds hard by my foot. "Attie is always in a panic about such things, and wouldn't come closer than 20 feet or so, but tossed me what I thought was the object I had asked for, - but instead of grabbing up the spade, she had picked up a mop which she tossed to me at a safe distance. What I was supposed to do with a mop with such a reptile at hand, I had no idea, and so I just raised up one foot and came down on the clump of grass as hard as I could. I don't know if the snake or I was more surprised, for I apparently came down with my heel on his back for he instantly twisted in every direction, but mostly around my ankle, but couldn't get to first base at the first strike. Had I landed on his head, - or even his tail, I guess the story would have been different. But I realized I couldn't stand there all day and that possibly by getting the spade myself, I might eventually catch up with him on my return. But I had no luck, and although I beat about with some industry, I never did catch up with him again. I could gladly have crowned "Attie with the mop when I had finally given up my spade work.

With Grandpa and Taffy eradicating all the mice and rats around the place, I reckon the poor old snakes must be finding the larder on the lean side, and few of them will linger long in a neighborhood where cats keep control of the rodents. I must tell Beau of my adventure, for he will like the coincidence.

The Dormon enclosure is a typical Dormon, following the usual pattern of old maid denunciation for me not writing, proving that absent treatment is effective eventually, and ending up on the usual note, leading a regular correspondent to believe that "ole Virginia" must spend half her life cranking up the car and getting ready to head out whenever Caroline takes typewriter in hand. I shall respond promptly, as is my custom, telling her I never count her letters but only those from people who are my regular correspondents, and that besides, I think she is a bag, - and she will be furious. I shall also say: "Isn't it monstrous what overtook Blythe and, - but add not one other word, and that will put her in a tizzy to learn to what I have reference. So much for stirring up the Briar patch, quittey ni lahemurani jaon

Again my thanks for your nice letter. I hope there may be something from Herr Mansford to send along to you in a twinkling..

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Tuesday, October 11th, 1949. as I ow

Memorandum: Were the Madam here, she would be saying: "I ain't worth the powder and shot to blow me up".

With the heat and humidity both in the mid 90's, and a sultry sun warming the water particles and drying nothing, one moses about at reduced speed, generally listless and not caring much if school keeps or doesn't. But the pilgrimage business thrives.

I am glad to hear from the Harbesses, following their arrival at Orleans, but there is a note of sadness in their letter, it seems to me, when speaking of civilization having finally caught up with Orleans. Somehow it reminded me of the Natches I knew before the cement highways spilled contemporary civilization, its oil and its riff-raff, into the place and the traces were leveled and the inhabitants lost. Of all incoming mail at Melrose today, a letter addressed to a mulatto mother perhaps caused the biggest flyrry, not in the mother's heart as in the spleen of a hill billy who was lounging at the store awaiting the ginning of his cotton, who volunteered to read the letter for the woman, since she doesn't know how. The woman's daughter married a New Mexico boy of color a year or so ago back, - a soldier, - and the wife has recently accompanied her husband to Europe where he is stationed, I believe in Germany. In the letter, the daughter remarked that she and her husband were getting along alright and that they had found a very good servant, - a white woman, "suddenly the air grew denser" as said hill billy automatically went skyward and the air all around turned blue. I felt genuinely sorry for the poor mother, but at the same time the pent up rage that could find no adequate expression in the vocabulary of the hill billy was fearful and wonderful. I knew the woman would be passing the front garden a little later and as though by coincidence I found myself slashing at some trees near the big road when I saw she passed by, obviously a little shaken by her experience, albeit an innocent bystander.

I chatted with her a few moments, asking her if she had seen my secretary whom I was hoping to track down shortly as I had some mail - wanted him to help me with as soon as possible. She seemed glad to learn thus indirectly of someone who could read her and as mail for her, too, and naturally I told her that whenever she needed a letter written for her, I should be entranced if she would have my secretary bring her around and she could dictate it to me on the machine. She seemed ever so much relieved, having apparently discovered a way out of something which, because of the recent

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excitement, must have presented something like a brick wall to her
we far as future correspondence with her daughter was concerned.

Had I good sense, I guess I would look to writing some letters
on my own behalf, for as yet I haven't responded to 'ra's last
letter. The truth is that I half expected her on Saturday or Sunday,
or possibly Monday, and since it seems to require three days to
get a letter to travel the 15 miles from here to town, I concluded
anything I penned for her would be old stuff by the time she had
passed this way and then, a couple of days after returning home, she
received a note from me written prior to her visit. This T. and P.
schedule certainly gums up the works, so far as an exchange of
common courtesy goes.

From where I sit, a vast cannonading of light to the North
throws the black line of the bamboo hedge into sharp relief about
every five seconds, which, as sentences go, is about as poor a
one as could be struck off, and yet I gather you conclude that
somewhere off Arkansas way that stalled mass of cold air continues to
"stay put". No wonder the Ozark hill billies are starting to build
Arks, as the radio reports, for with the warm Gulf air passing over
the Cane River and bumping into the cold mass on the Arkansas
frontier, nothing else but torrents persisting for days could be
the result.

I haven't seen my friend Murrell since Saturday which may be
due to two reasons, - first and most likely, he is following the
usual "pattern of the imponderables" which impells so many of
my friends of color, and those who aren't my friends, too, - making
the attribute seem characteristic, - that of following an orbit that
unpredictably veers off center temporarily for four or five days, only
to return to the accustomed daily routine of little visits for
no known reason I have ever been able to discover. This, of course,
is one of the major elements, - this necessity of having at least
two or three people to do one job requiring continuity. And such
a necessity, of course, pre-supposes a lower wage scale for
plantation hands generally, since the place must be staffed on the
basis of expecting one man out of two when some chore requiring
immediate attention comes to hand. Fortunately my wandering Mr. Brew
has inexplicably come back into his regular course, and thus I can
find what little work I require being taken care of alright.

I believe Murrell may have hurt his side one day last week
in the gin but is too proud to tell any of the other workers, and
although he spoke of it to me, he did so in a most casual fashion.
He probably hasn't any money to go to a doctor and his account
at the store being already in the red, he is avoiding going in any
deeper on the chance, as all of us too often have taken, that whatever
is wrong may right itself. I shall lasoo the boy on Thursday morning
about knipmeyer time and so institute a little Yucca clinic on
the side, & Murrell's.

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Wednesday, October 12th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Last night's remote electrical display finally bore fruit
along between midnight and dawn when 2 inches of rain fell,
to be followed by a slow drizzle all day. Thus far, today being
the 12th, October has exceeded all previous rain records, which
is certainly off at a good start, were anyone desirous of
traveling in that direction.

Aside from some aquatic gardening in the morning, I
got several pages deep in a new short story, - tentatively styled
"The World's Greatest Broadcast", - which certainly is a modest
title, if nothing else, when Lo! I was called to the telephone.
That knocked my creative efforts out, - not into the middle of next
week, I hope, but out of all further efforts for today. It seems
the Picayune will publish the Madam-Melrose article in the middle
of November, but.....

The pictures were satisfactory, except that they wanted one
of the Madam, - and anything suitable is certainly hard to find,
curiously enough. The one by Frances Benjamin Johnston makes
her look like Whistler's Mother and the one by Dr. Rand is
definitely one of an individual who has long since passed her prime.

And then there was another hitch. There was too much
Cane River-Grandpere Augustin in the article, which, in all
truth, was obvious before the thing was mailed, but it was
the part which Mrs. Holloman had labored over and therefore
loved to the extent of incorporating in the first draft forwarded
to New Orleans. Would I supply a few pages of more personal side-
lights on the Madam, I would, and send them with a photograph
of Mrs. Henry. And by re-write the Picayune will jam through
the new material in place of some of the Cane River-Grandpere
stuff and will publish the whole under Mrs. Holloman's name,
and if the whole thing doesn't turn out a perfect mess, then
I shall be thunderstruck. I almost recommended that to top
the thing off properly, they might give Barnett Kane a buzz and
let him contribute a bit of his artistry, but then, on second
thought, it struck me nothing much could be added or taken away
from whatever type of stew the Picayune itself will finally cook up.

We may not make much money, but we certainly don't lack
for excitement at this bend of the river.

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The long distance telephone conversation was little short of a hedge-podge at its beginning. By some miracle, a Baton Rouge wire got crossed with our connection resulting in a four way conversation that was comprehensible to nobody, and it took ever so long to get us disentangled and re-connected. Finally back home, my friend Murrell passed by. He said his side was still causing him some trouble but since Saturday his papa had been on a bender and he had had to remain pretty close to home. I am glad he made it before the morrow, - Knipmeyer Day, and Murrell will pass this way regardless, although I glimpsed his papa in the big road just before dark, and it looked to me as though he might still be his son's "problem child" for at least another 24 hours.

Murrell helped me with a couple of letters which I thought might be of primary interest, but weren't, - one from Mrs. Holloman saying The Saturday Evening Post had rejected the Cane River article, which was no surprise, and the balance of my mail sits here unread at 9:30, leading me to believe my Mr. Brew must have gone off at a tangent again. All of which, of course, only goes to bear out my old saw that "You don't have to be, but it helps out a lot if you are.....". I saw Celeste and Madam Regard for a ten minute coffee hour this morning. They had much to say about the reception they attended last night at the home of Dr. and Mrs. McGintey, or however one spells the name of the college President. Celeste told me that she spoke at some length with the head of one of the departments, - but I can't seem to remember if it was the Art or Home Economics, but they spoke of intending to write me with a view to doing a tour here when a date can be struck that will suit their calendar and mine. Something tells me that will not be too easily arrived at, but we shall see. Madam Regard confided that someone had spoken to her about a rumor skirting the campus that I am to be invited to deliver a lecture, or possible a series of four lectures, under the auspices of the Department of History before some graduate gatherings at the college. Vaguely I seem to recall some such vaguery, but it's all so nebular in my mind that I can't seem to make much sense out of it. None of this has anything to do with the song and dance I am scheduled to perform on the 24th which, I gather, from little words dropped here and there, is being publicized by word of mouth by Celeste. What a disappointment those folks are storing up for themselves. A good thing I am not there to see it. Well, odd, so things turn, and half the people I know feeling sorry for me, so lonesome down there behind all those bushes." It seems to me I had something amusing to relate but whatever it was eludes me, and so I guess I shall just have to fold this up, and get to grinding out the balance of the Picayune stuff. And I should have spelled it with a small letter, for in the present instance, it makes the perfect adjective for what I have in mind....

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Thursday, October 13th, 1949.
Memorandum:

How nice to have your splendid week end letter in today's post, and let me hasten to thank you for passing along so many interesting particulars, and thus enlightening me as to literary goings-on, none of which did I know anything about.

I have heard several people mention the Tallant book, of course, but until you gave me an account of its story, its style and its general character, I was quite in the dark about it. I found it hilarious that the title should have been entered on the card as *Salon* with a double o, which, if memory serves and the character was Lyle, the error merely brought the title into proper focus.

And I had heard nothing of the Kane-de Maupassant parallel, which certainly ought to set the corpse of the latter to revolving in its grave. I know nothing about de Maupassant as an individual, but surely he couldn't have been so bag-ish as his Crescent City counter-part.

I hope I warned you not to sample the persimmons until they were pleasantly soft to the touch, for while still firm, they are said to be ever so bitter. Perhaps they arrived so soft that they had spilled all over everything and weren't in an edible condition, but I hope not, what with the other stuff traveling in the same package.

No, they were not from Arenbourg but Melrose, but similar to those planted on our fine "plantation". The Arenbourg ones, - the trees, - bloomed this year and undoubtedly would have brought forth fruit, but I snipped off all the blossoms so that the strength that otherwise would have gone into the fruit would be expended exclusively in the growth of the tree.

Only this morning I noticed that both the pears and persimmons at Arenbourg are starting to bloom all over again. I certainly can't blame them for getting confused about the seasons, what with this year's weather having been so extraordinary.

I got off a batch of stuff covering the mauled Picayune article, together with one lone snapshot which I hope will be used instead of the one Mrs. Holloman wanted to use, - the last picture taken of the Madam, last October. That picture doesn't look so much like her, it makes her look so ancient, while the snapshot isn't too perfect, for it is rather too young-ish, and it

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doesn't suggest a Louisiana setting so very convincingly, what with having been taken in the snow. I can't imagine where all my photographs of her could have gone, although I suspect one I had of her working on her scrapbooks, - one in fact she sent me in New York, may have been "borrowed" by that loutish Kane person, for I never could find it again after he had occupied my house once during my absence.

I have a very excellent one of her and Lyle, taken about 1920 but what with the hazards of everything stalking the steps of the present article, I thought I would rather be sure of the likeness right here than to send it harum-scarum through the cubbies of the Picayune offices. The snapshot was taken about the time Lyle made his first round at Melrose or shortly thereafter, and is pasted in a photographic album, devoted mostly to colored people, but it does contain the article which more than any, I suppose, reveals his first impressions of Melrose and accordingly is quite interesting from that point of view. And under the circumstances, I much prefer retaining the photograph for the Picayune thing isn't of much moment anyway, and possibly we might find we could use the "Cousin Sam" and Lyle pose to greater advantage at some other sitting.

The Knipmeyers passed this way on schedule and I was glad to be assured the Murrell's problem was based on a strain and not on anything organic. The Knipmeyers had much to say about a picture they had recently seen in town, - French, I believe, having to do with the life of St. Vincent de Paul. I have had such adverse experiences in viewing costume pictures as brought forth both by Hollywood and European studios that I am not at all sure I should have found the costumes and settings sufficiently to my liking to have given the real part of the picture its just due. I shall never get over the effect produced on me when I saw Pola Negri in "Dubarry", wherein Louis XV was pictured as receiving at Court, standing slap in front of an heroic portrait of Louis XVI in coronation robes. It is ridiculous to let such anachronisms ruin an entire theatrical production, but at the same time it is astonishing what a tiny piece of brick in one eye can do by way of spoiling one's view of the grandest panorama in the world.

I sometimes think, too, that in movies the actors must appear in their costumes at such brief moments that they never seem to be accustomed to them, and so introduce a sensation of play acting which, of course, the sole purpose of the theatre is to avoid. I guess that is why I sued to love Moliere as presented at the Odeon for the actors, seemingly having worn their 17th century costumes all their lives, seemed like every day people in every day clothes, and not some Mr. Preen all rigged up to head out for Mardis Gras.

Your letter was no nice, I must say, thanks and thanks again....

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Friday, October 14th, 1949.

Memorandum:

How rich am I, what with two letters in the same post both addressed in the same hand.

And how thoughtful of you to let me know that the slip, - at long last, - had finally reached 908.

I am glad you liked the appearance of the sun dial after all the endless talk I devoted to it. I reckon the whole outfit must have taken on proportions not unlike what the mind builds up when someone confides in a whisper that a secret is about to be divulged when circumstances permit, for usually just that maddening bit automatically begins building something so tremendous in the mind that nothing in heaven above or the earth beneath could ever be vast enough to fill in the mental picture we contrive in our minds in sheer anticipation, which, in the end, turns out to be nothing more than that a pet cat has had kittens or some such. And, since I have just made such a marvelous demonstration, don't let me forget to admit that I know the wise acres maintain that no sentence should be over 19 words, while mine usually run along for at least 19 lines.

And how kind of you to give me particulars about the recent Roosevelt articles. That certainly was a helpful butler who walked out when needed most merely because colored servants were being brought in to assist at Hyde Park during the visit of the King and Queen. It is somehow so typical of the stupidity always to the fore when personal whims or prejudices are given unbridled rein and dumb bells strain at a knot to swallow a camel. I don't know if they would be worth it, but those are the people for whom it would be a pleasure to invest one's savings in order to purchase powder and shot to blow them into the middle of next week. The Woolcott reception of Mrs. Roosevelt on her return to the White House was hilarious, and I sincerely appreciate the laugh it brought with the telling.

Returning to the films from the birthday camera, I shall be ever so interested to see what a Manhattan handler of such material may do with them, and it will be interesting to see what the brothers Battiste will look like when through more ample representation, they move a little more within my range of vision.

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Of the enclosures, one must admit the Reader's Digest was ever so much more polite than The American Mercury. Perhaps if you can make a note somewhere of the name of the writer, it might serve at some other sitting, as in the case of the Pilgrim thing or the Broadcast item, - if and when circumstance permit me to whip them into shape.

You will like the Parish letter. She is remarkable in two respects, - first, that professional writers usually don't bother to write personal letters; and secondly, she seems to write as charmingly in her correspondence as she does in other lines of typewriter pushing, which also, I think, is seldom accomplished by other writers.

I had mentioned in the note accompanying her persimmons that I hoped her forth-coming book would fetch much gold and glory, and the clever way she turned the reference was neat.

There was a fairly heavy mail today, perhaps 14 or 20 letters, but Mr. Brew went to Monroe and Murrell isn't quite up to snuff as yet, and so I retained him only long enough to run through the items mentioned above. Besides there is some kind of a frolic going on at the honkey-tonk, and I know the child was leaping to get going in that direction.

My Reading Machine has gone to town again, Mrs. Combs having passed this way this noon to pick it up for some time. This is her first day at her office this week and I am hoping the pulling and hauling attendant upon manipulating the machine may not put her back under a physician's care.

Today's pilgrims included a couple of lovely people from Kilgore, Texas. They were heading for Natchez, New Orleans and back home via Bayou Teche, which seems to make quite a popular route for Texans, almost going around a triangle without ever having to retrace any steps or recover the same territory twice.

I hate to say it, - for as soon as I do a thousand broadcasters will start telling us how many shopping days it is until Christmas, but facts are facts, and already Natchitoches is beginning to rig up its electrical display in anticipation of the impending holidays, and this year's profusion in lighting effects is going to out-do or do anything previous. In the past it has been charming, and I only hope it doesn't move away from that quality by moving into something super-colossal, which must be spelled funny enough.

It has been such a pleasant day, thanks to you, and thanks and thanks again....

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Sunday, October 16th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Wonders will never cease, first, because for an entire day, this 16th of October, the sun beamed mightily without a fleck of clouds in the sky, and secondly, somebody brought me a drink. It seems Peter took a chance of a quarter of whiskey, - 25 cents a throw, and won. Three or four of the gay young blades of his crowd, Little King, Charlie Turner, Murrell and so on, suddenly came tapping at my door about first dark, announcing that Peter had been the lucky winner and that they had brought the bottle down for me to open and have the first drink. There is no fathoming the way their mind works, and I shall never attempt. All I know is that I had nothing to do with the two bit piece invested in the chance, but that I was glad to inaugurate the bottle and send them on their way to finish it.

Dr. Rand dropped in to see me this morning, and I accepted their invitation to dinner with some of their friends I had not met. We had a pleasant sitting and I was back home again by 2 where I found some pleasant pilgrims awaiting me, a Mr. and Mrs. Williams of Shreveport. In the course of conversation it turned out that Mrs. Williams, formerly of Chicago, had been a class mate in college with Mrs. Lake's daughter which opened up a whole flock of conversational avenues.

What with one thing and another, I did comparatively little with any electrical gadgets this week end. The fluctuation of current blew out my radio on Saturday night, and I shall let the thing rest for a while. But Mrs. Combs brought back my Reading Machine on Saturday. For a dollar and a quarter I could secure the proper tube for the thing in Natchitoches, which seemed a wise investment, even though it would have cost me nothing, had I sent the machine back to Baton Rouge. But that journey tends to consume two weeks, plus the hazard of the thing being out of kilter by the time it had made the return trip by Express, and I thought use of the thing over a two week period was worth the required tube cost on my own hook. Now if the Rural Electrification lines will stop jamming such devastating voltage in this area, I may have an opportunity to get caught up on my reading.

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An hour's interruption between this and the foregoing page intervenes, during which I had a little chat with Celeste who brought me a glass of buttermilk which her mother had stirred up today. It is the first I have had in ever so long and it was delicious, but if it had not come in the midst of our chat, I should have liked it equally well.

I wonder if I mentioned the hilarious note I received one day last week, from one of Celeste's nieces who passed this way on October 4th during the big wind. She very kindly dropped me a line to say how much she had enjoyed the tour, but added something unbelievable. She said that on reaching home she had immediately looked up Mr. Saxon's novel about the Gane River country and had re-read it. But I can't help wondering what, if anything she got out of the book, for surely "Children of Strangers" is a marvelous summation of the differences in social status and racial position of two distinct types of people begetting children and yet, to my utter astonishment she referred to the book as "Children or Among Strangers". Isn't that marvelous I must write that to Dora suggesting that it would be an appropriate title for a news item describing him and me attending a hill billy mass meeting, anti negro in character.

And did I mention the poor old gander who got lost over Arenbourg on Friday morning. There was a zero ceiling with the clouds banked heaven knows how high from the ground up, when I heard a vast honking not far above my head in the mist. Two or three times the throaty wail encircled the terrace and then, after a few moments that seemed like hours, I could hear the muffled sound of a battery of honks from what I took to be a much greater height. Somehow the old gander must have become separated from the flying wedge, and it in its turn must have circled back to pick him up if possible. At the sound of the chorus from on high, the lost brother let out a mighty squawk, instantly answered by his traveling companions, and they were on their way again. It seems a little early for the migrations to be under way, but reports from up Montana way do indicate dipping thermometers, and I haven't a doubt these feathered friends know what they are about, even though they do get lost occasionally in such soupy weather.

You will enjoy Mary's letter, even though it does report another cross for her to bear. I think her treatment of the mulatto matter splendid, apparently written with a dash and unconcern that seems quite breath-taking when issuing from a Mississippi pen. It has been a good week end and a quiet one, and I hope you may be able to report as much.....

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Monday, October 17th, 1949.

Memorandum: No need for a second visit at the house.

Definitely something is wrong. I can't figure it out, - two days of solid sunshine in a row. You understand, of course, that I am not complaining. I'm just puzzled, that's all.

This afternoon, Ora played hockey from the college library, and breezed down for an hour of concentrated labor with me. She read me the pilgrim thing as she had pieced it together, and believe it or not, I didn't even recognize my own child, although its individual members appeared vaguely familiar. And this wasn't because she had put the arms where the legs originally grew, but merely because I had forgotten how the thing had been contrived at the beginning. She has taken it back to town with her, and will type its scattered paragraphs into a logical progression. When it comes to hand, I shall drop it in the mail immediately, and you can see if you think it makes any sense.

Aside from that entirely satisfactory sitting, the day was a hurly-burly of interruptions. I started in on the Broadcast story half a dozen times, but never got down a paragraph before something or other barged in to forestall my industry. I shall continue the attempts until I wear out the interrupter by sheer endurance. But perhaps the breaking up of efforts in that particular line weren't without benefit, for it started my mind on figuring out a title that seemed a little less dumb than "The World's Greatest Broadcast". It might sound a little too much like Christmas to call it "Hark, The Herald Angels", but perhaps something like "Miracle in Mississippi", might be suitable. We shall eventually see.

While I think of it, I must refer to an after-echo of the Spellman-Roosevelt affair which you will like. Ora and I were so busy with the Pilgrim thing we had scant opportunity to gossip, but she did tell me of the confusion that reigned in various quarters when anti-Roosevelt people were confronted by what seemed to them the necessity of taking sides in that matter.

Dr. Deyser of the college has always been rabidly anti-Roosevelt, both F. D. R. and Eleanor. Being on the anti side to start with, he is also rabidly anti Catholic. Fancy, then, his predicament when Francis, Cardinal Spellman, took vitriolic or alcoholic pen in hand, and Madam R., in due time, took tempered steel typewriter in hand for a response. Among a few other like minded citizen, Dr. Keyser found himself in a perfect tizzy, but finally he broke down, and bursting into the library, announced to Ora that

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much as he hated to do so, in spite of all his hatred of Mrs. Roosevelt, for once he had to admit publicly that the Cardinal must either have been drunk or out of his mind and that Mrs. Roosevelt, in this instance, at least, had been oh! so right.

I must say I can't help but marvel at the instrument God chose to turn the tide and send it whirling in such mighty surges.

And, since the sun never shines but it glows, as opposed to the old saw about it never rains but it pours, none other than Don Worsley came by tonight about 8. He is going over to Natchez tomorrow morning to make a survey of Minor and associated family papers. He wondered if I had ever heard of Oakland Plantation, where a Mrs. Jeanne Minor McDowell, brother of Duncan Minor, had lived. I had. He doesn't know if the new owners merely want an appraisal made of the library, or if they also want to dispose of the private papers, but if possible, he will obtain the latter and would appreciate it if I would run through them with him. I will. And it will be a pleasure, what's more.

He had much to tell me about the Goat Castle auction, which certainly must have been a three ring circus. He says he has a little folder of the 1830's from Goat Castle he would like to give to me. It is a listing of the various horses, owners, etc., participating in an Alexandria racing season, which ought to be of the greatest interest. I should imagine.

He also, on leaving, spoke of a piece of marble from another historic house he has for me. I should like that, and, if not too costly, I should like to have a few letters cut in it, spelling out the name Arenbourg, don't you think so.

He said somebody told him I contemplated inviting the refugee doctor and his wife to Melrose and that if I cared to have him do so, he would be glad to bring them down. I set a tentative date and he will check with them to see how their schedule runs.

I must drop Miss Nellie a line, but be careful to avoid any mention of the Oakland business and the possible disposal of the papers of which her old friend, Miss Jeanne, was for so many years the custodian. If Don acquires them, I reckon most of them will end up in L. S. U., which, perhaps, is better than being left to the vagaries of the present owners of Oakland who certainly know nothing about them and care less.

It has seemed a little odd today, what with all the sunshine that only silence should obtain from the direction of the gin. But I suppose another day or two like Sunday and Monday, and the old outfit will be going its seasonal full blast, the sound of which delights my soul for all the pennies it implies for our little friends.....

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Tuesday, October 18th, 1949.

Memorandum:

To hand your elegant letter, together with its fascinating enclosures, including the equally elegant translation, and the accompanying Manilla folder with the Blue Grove article, plus the printed material covering same.

I am glad the package came to your true hand in good order and that the persimmons turned out to be so much to your liking. You can readily appreciate my impulse to incorporate them in the Arenbourg drive, what with their double virtue of producing food of sorts and a beauty as sheer ornament.

I might say that the larger of the "golden apples" is of a variety, usually styled Japanese, carrying as it does the cap like formation on the upper third of the fruit. The American variety paralleling this type is almost identical for size but with smooth like an apple without the cap like formation, which somehow always suggests a string had been tied about the fruit during growth. Both the Japanese and American trees bearing this larger fruit are inclined toward roundness in its arrangement of branches, while the Chinese or Oriental, or smaller fruit grow on trees that incline to be rather taller but with much less spread of the branches. I should say there is the approximate difference in tree spread between these two types that exists between the pear tree and the apple tree.

In any event I am glad you liked them, and was impressed by your reference to the sweet olive which I am glad still retained a suggestion of its perfume on reaching you, and especially as the sweet olive was from our own Arenbourg.

It was good of you to refresh my memory about Aunt Benjamin's letter, especially the dates of her son's death and so on, for I had forgotten them. She really must have been a remarkable woman, and how mightily has her plantation come down, now that it is occupied by the Sam Tobins.

As for your translation of Grandpere's will, I am consumed with admiration for your accomplishment, and doubly so in view of the imperfect text which confronted you.

Often shall we have occasion to refer to it, and as I shall frequently be having it re-read to me, I shall be coming back to it again and again, if you don't mind.

What strikes one with especial force is not so much what Grandpere mentioned and to whom he referred in his will, but rather those

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things and people he omitted to mention. At the time the will was drawn, of course, Louis, his son, was the owner of Yucca plantation whose new house (Melrose) he had built seven years prior to the 1840 will.

(Machine kicking up)

I am interested that he set sufficient store by his clock to mention it. It is the one standing here in my boudoir, as you know.

But isn't it odd he doesn't mention his portrait or that of his wife, and that he makes no reference to other pieces of furniture, with two exceptions. The armoire, of course, is of particular interest, as having been his mother's. Since it will be recalled she was from the Congo, one would assume that armoires were something she became accustomed to after reaching maturity.

One assumes the little mulatto child referred to as worthy of passing under the protection of his son whom he requests to emancipate, strongly suggests that the child slave was sired by himself by a slave mother who was less fortunate than his own, in that in the case of Augustin and his mother, they were both freed by the white father on Augustin's birth. Apparently the son, when it came time for him to beget a child by similar extra-marital connection, did not feel moved so strongly toward emancipating his own child as had his own father.

As for Jean Baptiste Metoyer, you will recall he is the son whose house was taken down a few years ago, and that we have a number of the openings from that house. I take it that by gifts to his several children years before the 1840 will was drawn, Grandpere had already apportioned the inheritance of these children to them, which may account for the omission of individual names in this final instrument. It was in 1833, for example, that Grandpere had given Louis twenty-five thousand dollars, - an impressive sum in those days, I reckon.

Francois Gassion lived just above, - this side, of the spillway, and the foundations of his old house still remain, although the edifice itself was taken down, and only a wing of it used to build a dwelling, now occupied by the Kirklands, right on the margin of the river and the spillway. His granddaughter, Flavite Metoyer, now 76, cooks for the priests at St. Augustin's Church, and she has her grandfather's portrait, - old Francois Gassion, which I should very much like to obtain but probably shall never do, as one of the reverend fathers seem intent on obtaining it, and I have no doubt Flavite, as a soul saving device, will eventually bequeath it to this member of the cloth who probably will not even be living on Cane River within another 6 months.

As Clemence lived in Grandpere's house just before it burned, I shall ask her to draw a floor plan of it for our scrapbooks, and perhaps she can paint a picture of it from memory.....

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Wednesday, October 19th, 1949.

Memorandum:

More sunshine today; more clouds tonight; more heat and humidity all around, with foolish pear trees bursting into bloom all over the place.

I became so interested in Grandpere's will in yesterday's Memo that I neglected to thank you for other news items you touched upon in your letter, and especially do I appreciate your kindness in acquainting me with the impending nuptials between the House of Hapsburg and de Ligne. Surely such a union would have pleased the old Prince, and Marie Therese, his old friend, couldn't have frowned upon it too much, especially in view of all the changes that have come to the status of the Hapsburgs. I think I shall drop Prince Albert a note, addressing it to Beloeil, on the assumption that this former Ambassador to the United States may still be alive and that Beloeil has survived the 1939 - 1945 doings in Belgium. Believing as I do in the use of anodynes for relieving pain, so, too, do I believe, in a measure, that one might as well avoid unpleasant realities, but I must confess I sometimes laugh at myself for my hesitancy in communicating with some people whom I have liked, when I should prefer to think of them as being among the living, - a thought that might be shattered on occasion were I to write. Beloeil, too, was such a lovely place, I prefer to think of it as still extant, which it probably is, but I am just as happy not knowing it if, in reality, it is no more.

Perhaps the marriage will be celebrated at Beloeil, even as was that of Prince Charles and the Countess Potocka, but let us hope the newly weds will fare better in their attempt at matrimony that did their 18th century counterparts.

For the past couple of days I have been impressed by the wisdom of that old adage: "Society knows but one rule, - Conformity".

Everyone I know up and down the social ladder has been sniffing and wheezing, and so, in order to conform, I started sniffing along with the rest. The stuffed owl influence dominated my gray matter, if any, and operation of thought processes came to a standstill. But I undertook a cure that often serves me well in such circumstances, plenty of sleep and

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a normal amount of physical exercise, and I gather that in consequence thereof, I am now practically back to normal again.

I put in a good morning at Arenbourg, making preparations about the magnolias, for a bedding of cotton hulls, which I shall begin spreading on the morrow. Log brought us two truck loads today, so we shall have an ample supply for several other items than the magnolias.

At Yucca I decided to make a mirror out of the 15 panes of glass in the door giving on the front gallery. I accordingly painted the outside with black lacquer and then daubed up the whole door with white paint, covering glass as well as frame. Now the former window in the door is a black mirror and enchantingly picks up the lights from the white garden on the opposite of the house, not to mention the sun dial which looks ever so ghostly from the depths of the black mirror reflecting it.

I had to interrupt my decorative impulses a couple of times to contend with pilgrims from Nova Scotia, no less, and to give Grandpa a little first aid. It would be unjust to say that Grandpa is sedentary in his habits, but most certainly he is sedate, but he loves to play hide and seek with pretty little green lizards who some times venture on the gallery, and that impulse today was his undoing. He caught sight of one 3 or 4 feet up on the wall and jumped straight up in the air to catch it. But in spite of his success on the way up, he came down on the splintered top of a Coca Cola bottle, cutting his foot so that much gore oozed all over the doorstep. I guess this is the first time I ever heard of a cat cutting his foot on a Coke bottle. By dint of a little cauterizing on my part and much licking on his, Grandpa was soon on the mend again, but I doubt if he did any more straight-up-in-the-air leaping for the balance of the day.

You will find entertainment in the Shreveport enclosure. My secretary tells me some of the spelling is pretty hilarious, which fact, added to the stunning examples of my own you find incorporated in this note, ought to provide a couple of laughs. The electric blanket she mentions still graces the Madam's bed, and certainly requires no attention.

I felt impelled to drop Mrs. Roosevelt a line for no other reason than to echo what she undoubtedly knows well enough, - that the tide of her popularity continues to run impressively in her favor. And now I shall read a couple of pages from The Bible, and thence to bed, for I want to be stirring cotton hulls early on the morrow....

3874

Thursday, October 20th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The weather remains humid to the cozing stage, and much too warm for the season. Anyone passing to be possessed of sense would proceed along lines of a slow motion movie, but my memory is faulty in maintaining my motions at such a tempo in consequence whereof I have no difficulty at all in going to sleep in a jiffy, once I hit my downy couch.

I saw Celeste for a moment this noon. She had been in Cloutierville during the morning to get a baptismal certificate for somebody or other, and not finding Father Becker at the Rectory, had gone on to the gin where she found him up to the hips in the business of baling cotton in the gin in which he hold half interest.

It is interesting that the Cameron enclosure should have reached me on the same day, complaining that nothing was forthcoming from Father Becker in response to repeated inquiries regarding Mr. Bachelier. With the fortune he is already possessed of, plus the fifty thousand dollars or so he appropriated from the Bachelier estate, one would think he might be able to hazard three cents on a stamp to send a line to an old friend of Mr. Bachelier. In short, what a bag is Becker.

Being Thursday, the Knipmeyers passed this way. They brought an invitation from Miss Sally, asking me to come to dinner at Magnolia with the Knipmeyers, and adding that my friend, Father Colmar or Colbert or whatever his name is, would grace the same board. But I declined, of course, not having three or four hours these days to devote to the social side of life in the middle of the day. I learned from my guests that one of the other priests, a Father Kemp, or some such name, lately arrived at this post, - perhaps here but a couple of months, has already been transferred elsewhere, - in a generally northerly direction. I never did see the man but take it he must have been a sterling soul, a little too rigid for adjustability. When Madam Regard, who takes her Catholicity pretty much without question, found him unsocial, I was convinced he really must be. At Magnolia one day for dinner, he refused dessert, saying it was a non essential food and therefore to be disdained, and on the same visit denounced all inhabitants of the country south of the Mason-Dixon Line as being unforgivably lazy. Poor little old thing, cast in a role to lead others to happiness and salvation, he hasn't himself learned the first rules of either game.

Clemence appeared on my back gallery just after the

3875

Knipmeyers had gone. She came to pick up the photograph
"Mrs Moore" had 1 it for her.

I have so long wondered where Grandpere's picture might
have hung in his own home that I was glad to Clemence's
presence to help me in determining this point, since she
had lived in the old mansion at the time it burned about
30 years ago. She did a sketch of the front view of the
house for me, and then made a floor plan, and from the latter,
plus the establishment of which was the original living room, and
there narrowed down wall space to such a point that only in
some one place could a painting of such dimensions be situated.

There were many features incorporated in the architecture
of Grandpere's home that are patent in other early homes
of this region. The most striking single point was the
early type of window, practical in design and location, as
made in the early days of building. The openings for all
early homes were designed with a dual problem in mind,
to permit entry of wind and light and to prevent entry of
animals. Accordingly the windows were
small and frequently placed above eye level in the room. I
have seen many of these in the early residences and
in log cabins of the early settlers. Clemence could
remember, and she volunteered this information without
questioning, that all the doors in the house were very large and
basically very heavy, - thick like and heavy on the hinges - as
she said she phrased it. I reckon this is a feature
that has been lost both as to the door and the hinge. I suppose
animals, but probably more particularly with a view of warding
off Indians, whose depredations must still have been re-embered
vividly by builders of houses in this area. I have seen
in some of the old houses, where the original doors remain but the wooden barred
windows in the front and side rooms are still just as they
were when the house was constructed. These, of course, were
designed to keep out wild animals, particularly panthers.
Oldsters, such as Joe Boone and Duke Kirkland, both in their
80's, have recalled the barred doors - that is the double door,
made of bare wood after the fashion of a modern cell door in a jail,
which swung on hinges and was closed at night to keep out the
animals; when the big solid door was left open for better
circulation of air. Naturally these doors of wood were
here the first to be damaged by the fire, and the danger of
wild beasts died. It seems odd that in view of such a type of
door, I never heard of the people in those days to stretch a
mosquito bar over the door, or to have the frame
rather than the door itself being the introduction of
the necessary of modern life, well into the 1900's, I believe.
I forgive me for having to go off the track. I'll
keep things in better balance on the narrow...

3876

Friday, October 21st, 1949.
Memorandum:
It's still hot and humid, with narcissus greenery leaping from
the ground as butterfly lilies in bigger clusters than ever bow down
to greet them.

You will enjoy the enclosure from Mr. Lansford. I shall
attach my acknowledgement in order that you may be kept abreast with
this correspondence. You will recall that the whole thing
had its inception due exclusively to you and your unfailing
devotion in keeping me abreast with what goes on in the world.
Apparently Louisiana will benefit in its re-valuation and consciousness
of its Art heritage, - thanks to your fore sight.

If you should care to keep the original Lansford letter, I
should be glad if you would do so. I had in mind, however, to
paste notations in the scrapbook carrying the photos of Grandpere
and Father and Son, and so, in the event you care to keep the
original communication, you might some time, - any old time,
make me a duplicate notation of the paragraph or two, referring to
Lion and Seu(v)ille, - however it is spelled, so I may paste them
on the two separate pages on which the photos appear.

Of the several interesting points touched on in the Lansford lett
(letter), not the least one is the fact that the Henry Bullard and
the Augustin Metoyer portraits should have been done during the
same year. In the hurried reading of the letter, I wasn't
quite sure if the suggestion was made that the Bullard portrait
was executed in New Orleans, but I assume not. What I suppose
is that the artist, having done one, did the other on the same
visit up this way, - and I should love to know which one turned
out first and which second. In the mean time, I must begin
tacking down the old Bullard portrait and perhaps I shall find
some interesting data along the way.

James and Rosalyn Aswell came by to see me this afternoon,
bringing a "rs. Wyatt of King Features, with them. James said
it was too early to get any reaction to the Collier's article which
was scheduled for appearance today, but he thought it would not
be very extensive, since the article didn't amount to much. I
don't know if he was just being modest or if he really felt that
way.

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I have so long wondered where Grandpere's picture might have hung in his own home that I was glad to Clemence's presence to help me in determining this point, since she had lived in the old mansion at the time it burned about 30 years ago. She did a sketch of the front view of the house for me, and then made a floor plan, and from the latter, plus the establishment of which was the original living room, and there narrowed down all space to such a point that only in one place could a painting of such dimensions be situated.

There were many features incorporated in the architecture of Grandpere's home that are patent in other early homes of this region. The most striking single point was the type of window, practical in design and location, as made of early glass, early built. The openings for all early houses were designed with a dual problem in mind, to permit entry of individuals and at the same time, but to prevent entry of animals. Accordingly the windows were small and frequently placed above eye level in the room. I have seen many of these thus placed, both in early residences and in log cabins of the early settlers. Clemence could remember, and she volunteered this information without questioning, that all the doors in the house were very large and heavy, - "thick-like and heavy on the hinges" - as she phrased it. I reckon this fortress-like feature must have been useful both as protection against more aggressive animals, but probably more particularly with a view of warding off Indians, whose depredations must still have been remembered vividly by builders of houses in this area. As a result of some of the original doors remain but the wooden barred windows in the front and living rooms are still just as they were when the house was constructed. These, of course, were designed to keep out wild animals, particularly panthers. Oldsters, such as Jean Macque and Duncan Kirkland, both in their 80's, have recalled the barred doors. - That is the auxiliary door, made of bars much after the fashion of a modern cell door in a jail, which swung on hinges and was closed at night to keep out the animals, when the big solid door was left open to greater circulation of air. Naturally these doors of wooden bars were the first to be hinged out of existence, when the danger of wild beasts died. It seems odd that in view of such a splendid frame, I never occurred to the people in those days to stretch a mosquito bar over the door. It seems to have been the frame rather than the door that netting that delayed the introduction of mosquito netting into the 1900's, I believe. I forgive me for having gone off the track. I'll keep things in better balance on the morrow...

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1786

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Memorandum:

It's still hot and humid, with narcissus greenery leaping from the ground as butterfly lilies in bigger clusters than ever bow down to greet them.

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Rosalyn had never seen Clemence's things and of course was glad of that opportunity. James said he would like to come down any afternoon next week to chat. I asked him if he thought Collier's might hesitate to publish a Melrose Pilgrim thing in view of its commitments with him. He said he would be glad to run over the manuscript with me and give me an opinion. Since I wasn't asking his opinion on the manuscript but whether he thought the magazine might reject too much coming from the same area, I let that one pass. I think it just as well if you and I fiddle with the Pilgrims and let James go on with his Confessions. Don't you think so?

I think what he is planning to do is to turn out some syndicated stuff for King Features, voodoo that is still extant, etc., and from what Mrs. Wyatt said when we were in another room at Yucca, I gather that something must have been said prior to their Melrose visit that I might be a source for such unpublished folk lore. There are so many books on that subject, Mr. A. can find lots of stuff he can mull over without any need for pulling out any tail feathers behind my bamboo hedge. I like him but I think it just as well if he and I keep our respective folk lore eggs in separate baskets.

Mrs. Coombs passed this way at noon and dined with Eugene, Mr. Wood, Brazeale, or however that prominent family spells its name. Mr. Brazeale is a Natchitoches lawyer and husband of that outrageous but gifted Clarisse who came here high one Sunday afternoon a year or so ago and nearly landed the Madam, reclining on the sofa, onto her menialap where she threw herself on to the floor.

The conversation turned about Father Becker, with me, for once, as a listener. Eugene Lavespeare told us that Father Becker didn't like him as a child, and that when Eugene's mother died of a sudden heart attack, Father Becker wouldn't let the funeral be held in the Church because Eugene's mother had failed to receive the last rights of the Church, - a thing impossible, of course, since she had quite unexpectedly dropped dead. With none of the people at table did Father Becker seem to be a particularly popular figure.

From my grapevine along about first dark, I learned that Little King is now the papa of a little girl, the mother being in the Alexandria Charity Hospital. I believe Little King plans to slide down to see his first offspring on Saturday. He was so busy picking cotton today, he couldn't get away. How much like children of deep color, - the reaction to any event being so contrary to what one would naturally suppose. I suppose his wife can take the new arrival with comparative calm, since this is her third child, but since it is the first sired by Little King, one would suppose he would take the event less stocially. I wonder what they will name the little girl. It seems to me Sheba would be so nice to go with the Solomon last name.

Well, so much for local doings, and again my thanks for the particulars your Lansford contact has brought forth.....

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Sunday, October 23rd, 1949.

Memorandum:

An exceptionally quiet week end, I am happy to report. The humidity continues, with a little sprinkle or two now and then, but it is cooler by a few degrees and that seems to make quite a difference.

I didn't hear much news of doings in the Saturday night road, other than the usual little brushes and bumps. Maybelle's husband, Olivier, and Maybelle's lover, Peter, had a minor set-up at Frenchie's honkey Tonk up near St. Mathews, but without enough blood letting to make it very interesting. But the night will come before long when one or the other, or both, will be carted away to a hospital, - if not the graveyard.

There was an automobile wreck with two cars still in the ditch. Cy, the uncle of Little King getting tangled up with Joe Coute's horseless carriage, but while the cars were completely demolished, by some miracle, which with colored folks around here appears to be no miracle at all, no one was really hurt much, except Willy and his wife, Honey, who both got their lips sufficiently mashed up as to require stitches. It was Honey who got knocked down with a chair, wielded by Willy a few weeks back, but that head wound has already sufficiently healed as to make the new plain sewing much more exciting. So unrolls Saturday night, and what tonight will eventuate only the good Lord knows.

At dinner on Saturday, Eugene, the clerk and I fell to talking about taxes, the way salaried people have to pay them and operators of larger economic units can get around paying them. He told me that shortly before his mother died, she tried to get on an Old Age Pension roll but was denied because her husband had a job paying him one hundred dollars a month. He contrasted this situation with the case of Mesdames Regard and Williams, both of whom are drawing six dollars a month or sixty five, because they are destitute. With the children she has and the grandchildren who are employed, - one with E. F. B. I., her approach to destitution wouldn't seem too impending. In the

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case of Mrs. Williams, she undoubtedly has been one of the largest land holders in the Parish, and still is, if she hasn't legally turned it over to her children, of which she has many, including R. B., the lawyer, J. H., the planter of several plantations, Mrs. Vernon Cloutier of \$30,000.00 worth of restoration work on Beaufort, and so on and so forth, with a banker son-in-law or two thrown in for good measure.

Such a picture really does make a striking contrast for the case of Eugene's mother, I must say.

In fairness to J. H. Henry, it must be said that he did express himself to various people, including one representative, at least, of the Relief Office, that he was opposed to Madam Regard being put on the rolls. But what he did by way of making it impossible for her to receive same, - such as meeting the amount from his private purse, I wouldn't know.

As Eugene sees it, too, both Madam Regard and Madam Williams are receiving about \$600.00 of untaxable income from the Government, both ladies backed by a potential drawing power amounting to hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars, while he, with himself, a wife and child, to support on a couple of thousand a year has to pay taxes of a couple of hundred dollars. He concluded by saying that it is true that both he and Dan receive partial disability payments monthly from the Government, and ended the discussion by observing that so far as he knew, I am the only individual he knows who shies away from taking Government money so long as I can make a go of it without doing so. One thing is certain, the present policy seems to guarantee a circulation of money, and I have about made up my mind that this is the way Washington will finally arrive at eventual communism years before Moscow gets started in that direction.

At the moment, - and for several moments to come, I am having animal trouble, - dead animal trouble. Last Saturday night I heard a dog yipping under Yucca. I suppose he must have been chasing an opossum, and probably injured it mortally, for "a stench, terrific and intolerable" seeps up through the floors of my boudoir and bath, and I am thinking of communicating with L. S. U. to find out how long it takes a dead opossum to be done with "wasting its sweetness on the desert air".....

3880

Monday, October 24th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The weather is being different. The rain is descending like something out of a gigantic tub. What a season.

I have all the doors and windows open and the sound of the rain on the banana leaves is nothing short of a cannonade, and I love it. But this deluge ought to knock out whatever, - if any, - remains of cotton in the fields, and what, if any, pecanes on the trees this morning, must be floating off down Red River way by now.

It was dark and pouring when I got home from speaking to that society group. I had the good fortune to stumble over something this morning which lent itself very neatly for an opening remark, to wit:

"At noon today it suddenly occurred to me that I was scheduled to speak on the general subject of Prose this afternoon. I want to congratulate the Club for having selected me as the ideal speaker on this subject for I am perhaps better qualified than anyone else that might have been chosen. After dinner, I consulted the Dictionary, thinking it might be well to acquaint myself with the definition of the word at least, and here is what I found:

'Prose: - Anything written or spoken in a dull, common manner.'

"Therefore it is obvious to the audience that a marvelous harmony has been struck in having me to address you, - 'dull and common place' for subject, equally dull and common place the speaker."

That got things off to a round of applause, and so the thing unraveled just like one, two, three, - and at the conclusion everyone was kind enough to say it went alright.

I am sure Eugene who did the looking up of the word for me, actually was reading the definition for me, had struck the word "prosaic", but on asking him to check it a second time, he still assured me that that was the definition for "prose", and naturally I was content to let it go at that.

Today's mail was light with the enclosure from Dr. Overdyke being the only thing of interest. I had rather expected some Talking Book or other, but the New Orleans Public continues to hold out on me. I think I shall have to put a flea in their ear if something isn't forth coming tomorrow.

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It seems a little odd, too, that I don't receive a Yes or No from Rudolph regarding the possibility of the Denton ceramic department making me a little African House, but things remain quiet from that quarter, too, while I have about given up expecting Nat Allen and his friends. I hope it doesn't all jam up at the same time, - Rudolph, the Harnesses and the Nat allens, since "only two people can talk".

Ten or fifteen minutes before it was time for me to leave this afternoon, Murrell, Log and Little King came to see me. We fell to kidding Little King about what he would have to do in his role, so new to him, of papa, for it seems he fetched his family home late Sunday night from Alexandria. Murrell said he would have to learn how to entertain the child with poems like

"One, two, buckle your shoe,
Three four, shut the door;
Five Six, pick up sticks,
Seven, eight, lay them straight;
Nine, ten, a big fat hen,
Eleven Twelve, dig and delve;
Thirteen, fourteen, maids a-courtin';
Fifteen, sixteen (I can't remember);
Seventeen, eighteen, (I can't remember);
Nineteen, twenty, an empty plate."

Naturally I was fascinated by all this rigamarole, and must inquire again about 17 through 18 and 15 and 16. The dull thud ending up the 19 and 20 must be the pay-off for tomfoolery in the two preceding lines, and it seems odd I don't recall them, for in typical negro style, once they got the sing-song going, they drew endless delight from endlessly repeating the thing.

Little King said his wife had named the child Emily, or as he enunciates the word, "Emma-lee", which certainly doesn't sound much like Sheba.

Come to think of it, their memory of the foregoing gingles must have gone to pieces on the last line, since it must have been

"Nineteen, twenty, plate's empty", but the way they did it was precisely like Brother used to contrive the last line of "Sing a song of six pence" with his inimitable rendition of the two final lines:

"The man was in the garden, hanging out clothes,
And along came a black bird and snipped his nose slap off."
And so plays out a rain-soaked, scant account day, and I may I do better on the morrow.....

3882

Tuesday, October 25th, 1949.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that your grand letter as of Thursday, last past, at 5:30 p.m., came to hand in this morning's post, and that it brought me no end of pleasure, and an equal amount of appreciation for the enlarged photograph of Log and Peter which is ever so much clearer than the little one I sent you. It will fit so nicely into my scrapbook.

I meant to say, - and I hope it isn't too late, that I don't need the negatives back, so if you would care to keep them with your own, I should be happy if you would do so.

I certainly hope the past week end turned out all quiet for you, as you had anticipated. I am genuinely sorry for you, what with the program you experienced on the business and domestic sides, since your last letter. I can well imagine how much you longed to investigate a dozen different items, including the Matchitoches volume, and some how our desires seem to make their objects ever so much more important when one is forced to deny one's self access to them because of various circumstances, - so many of which are of little or no consequence, save that they form barriers to the things we want to undertake.

You will enjoy the enclosures, - Helen's letter especially, for it is as usual in her own gay style and makes good reading. As for little Miss Dornon, my letter setting her out as a bag must have stung her a little bit. I smile to myself when she pleads poor health as an excuse for not getting down this way. Little does she suspect that I know of her jaunts to Shreveport and points North, and in responding to her, I shall of course make no reference to them, nor even breathe a word that her physician assured me that there is nothing sufficiently wrong with Caroline to cause any sleepless nights.

The Madam used to say that what Caroline needs occasionally is a little "absent treatment". That probably is one good way of handling her, but I gather from the results that sticking a pin in her now and then may be beneficial, too.

This unbelievable weather continues, with rain falling intermittently all night and heavily during this entire morning. It is much cooler, with low hanging clouds at first dark, and I shall not be surprised to hear another cannonade on the banana leaves almost any time.

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The New Orleans Public finally labored and brought forth a book, - but of course nothing I had ordered. I read the first page to see what it might be. It seems to be an English novel, copyright 1947, with the title, "Final Curtain" and is by one N-aio Marsh, - or some such. The first page suggest a drawroom type of thing, after the manner of the Lonsdale plays I like so much, and for light reading I reckon it will be entertaining. It seems like a far cry from the Lewis and Clark Expedition across the vast American wilderness to the Columbia River, but perhaps the Marsh thing will make the other seem ever so much more satisfying.

I had rather expected the Pilgrim thing from Ora in today's post but perhaps it will come on the morrow. I shall bounce it along to you as soon as it comes to hand. The Emma manuscript is here and I shall put it in the post, together with a page from the Waco paper that Helen referred to, thinking as I do that you might care to glance over the sheet and possibly file it along with Helen's letter.

As a post script to my speech yesterday, I threw a suggestion to the ladies in regard to working on the City and Parish fathers, with a view to getting civic funds appropriated with a view to awarding a trophy to the woman of the Parish who has best typified the ideals which the Parish holds in highest esteem (with the "e" turned about a little). It will be interesting to see if anything happens.

I quote Mrs. Roosevelt as saying that probably the greatest women in the country are those whom we do not know, whose labors in unselfish causes have made them much greater heroines than lime light could ever come up to, but that the gesture in the direction of making an attempt would be praise-worthy. I certainly think the lady doctor should be singled out for such a testimonial gift, and I guess I could name half a dozen others living within the Parish who might also qualify in one branch or another, perhaps Rosalyn and Clemence for their painting, Mildred Cunningham for her business acumen, Ora for her balance between domestic and extra-domestic interests, Aurellia for her devotion to her family and so on.

I intended saying the other day, in reference to my note to Mrs. Roosevelt, that I should be ever so delighted if someone would start a fund to be presented to "America's Most Worth Mother", both as a compliment to the lady herself and as a left-handed slap at old Francis Cardinal Spellman. Don't you think so.

Again my thanks for your nice letter and for the likeness of Peter and Log. We shall eventually examine it together in the Yucca scrapbook....

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Wednesday, October 2 26th, 1949.

Memorandum: You can believe it or not, - I cannot, - there hasn't been a sprinkle all day, not even a cloud in the skies.

And I should have appended a cancellation note to my Memo of yesterday, for I read a few more pages in the Final Curtain, only to discover that the brilliant beginning fast petered out, and the balance of the book was just another dull detective story, which is a great pity, what with the author having demonstrated at its inception that he could really write entertainingly.

But tonight's session holds greater promise, for "A Clouded Star" came to hand in today's post, and I feel certain that item will reveal greater sustaining power throughout.

But aside from that item, the mail wasn't so satisfactory. The volume was sufficiently imposing but strange enough, 11 out of 15 pieces were written in long hand by people who make miserable scrawls, and it is difficult for my poor assistants to make much out of them. The enclosure is an exception to the rule. I have of course returned Miss Cameron's to her, - one from Mr. Bachellier and one which her lawyer had written to Father Becker, which Father Becker had responded to by having noted at the foot of the same, "The man is dead and didn't mention your client in his will". I'll say he didn't. Father Becker saw to that. I remarked to Miss Cameron that if brevity is a virtue, then Father Becker is a virtuous man, both in his economy of stationary and words.

I saw Celeste at coffee time. She was feeling alright, but was in a mild panic over an impending social stew into which she had inadvertently jockeyed herself.

Some time back she had a note from Cousin Josephine, from Washington, saying she might get back to New Orleans for a little visit toward the end of October or early November. Celeste, as a gesture, acknowledged the letter, expressing the hope Cousin Josephine might find it convenient to pass by Melrose, either coming or going. Cousin Josephine responded immediately, saying that she would be glad to come, together with Hudson Grunewald, her son, and his wife, and Ouida, - whoever Ouida may be, and her husband. Invite 'em and receive five, -- which certainly sounds as though Celeste struck the jack-pot that time.

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I observed another example today of how one can live in a hurricane and never sense the breeze is stirring. Living in Natchitoches is the Johnson family, one of the wealthy business and real estate clans of imposing financial powers. Mr. Johnson's son-in-law, James McKnight, has been passing by Melrose for years and year, and during the autumn he usually has dinner with us three or four times a week. I suppose he is a college man, a veteran and possessed of a high cultural average. In view of these circumstances, you may readily imagine my surprise when at dinner today he asked me which section of the big house I occupied. When I told him I didn't occupy any part of it, but that I lived "over yonder", indicating the general direction with a nod of my head, he expressed surprise that J. H., Celeste, Madam Regard and I should all gang up in such a small house. The clerk at that point tried to get the man straightened out, and it developed that Mr. McKnight, after all the years he has been coming here, never dreamed there were any other than the two buildings, - the big house and J. H.'s. One can see the African House from the library, and he had been in the library dozens of times, but had never glanced out of the window. Isn't it amazing how intimately people can be mixed up with things and yet have no inkling of their existence?

Little King tapped on my door early this morning. At dawn he had gone in a truck beyond the cement highway in the Montrose area to fetch a load of cotton, raised in the bottom lands of Bayou Derbanne, and on the way had been entranced at the lovely carpet of green and purple, spread over the bayou by the water hyacinth, hyacinthes. He said when he saw them he thought I might like some, and so he had asked a colored lady for an old washtub and had brought back a billion. I shall accordingly have a big old sugar pot, some five feet in diameter, well decorated henceforth, and a single purple flagged plant, floating on the water, will lend color to my aquarium which I have contrived not only for housing some gold fish but also as a blind for observing some of our feathered friends who will dine throughout the winter on the shelf just outside the window here by my desk. With the aquarium between me and the birds, my presence will not disturb them, they being on the outside and I on the inside. And the gold fish who seem to relish the tender roots of the water hyacinth, can be banqueting at an inexhaustible table while the birds are working at their persimmons and suet, assuming Taffy and Grandpa don't get to the suet first.

With the weather so fine, I found vast inspiration to thrash around in the weeds at Arenbourg, and what with transplanting time in the offing, I am impatient to get to digging.....

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Thursday, 27th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Another day of full sunshine. But the air is cool, and tonight a fine crescent moon rides the star meadows in a cloudless sky.

I read but a page from "A Clouded Star" last night when drowsiness overtook me and I folded up. But I enjoyed what I read, and was struck by a phrase I hadn't heard before: - "The blacker the berries, the sweeter the juice".

And oddly enough, before another 24 hours had elapsed, I was to hear this unfamiliar phrase a second time, and quite authentically delivered. I was in the store where several colored people were standing about. Some colored woman came in and said to Little King that she had just seen his new daughter and remarked on how bright she was, - bright being the local word indicating not wits but color. Little King grinned and "allowed as how" the child took after (favored) its mother, who is a mulatto, and then to my complete surprise and utter delight, added:

"She sure is bright alright, not much like her papa, but you know what they all say: 'The blacker the berry the sweeter the juice'".

Don't you think such a ring of authenticity is unusual. I must remember to ask Little King the next time I see him how and when he came by that line. Eventually I think I should like to ask Anne Parish the same question.

It has been so long since I have been to a movie that I am quite surprised to discover that I am making plans to attend one within the near future. Fortunately, I shall not have to travel far to attend what I want to see, since it will appear on the screen in the saloon, or honkey-tonk, situated between Arenbourg and Yucca, at Alphonse's. And what picture moves me to such a frolic, - well I don't care much what the movie is but you may rest assured it will be a horse opera. It was only yesterday from a remark made by one of my negro friends that I learned for the first time what everybody else in the world probably knows: - to wit, that there are Western picture, - the run-of-the-mill cowboy stuff, in which all the cowboys and "cow-ladies", if I may coin a term, are negroes. One of my

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friends explained to me, after I had made some inquiries about the matter, that he much preferred to see and hear the colored cowboy pictures because "they always makes you laugh and in the white cowboy pictures, it don't look like they ever gets you much tickled". He further explained that the only drawback about the colored ones is that one doesn't hear much of the conversation because all "them no-account kids," they always have to do so much laughing out loud and just have to talk about whatever it is that's funny, so much of the dialogue is drawn in their gaffaws and chatter.

It has always pleased me enormously to note the ease and grace of local youths on horseback when driving cattle. Usually they seem equally at one with or without a saddle, and much of the grace that develops in this unit of horse and rider is the fact that both animal and rider seem so much a part of each other that the harmony of line and movement is perfect. Not until I saw them slide on to an unsaddled horse and whisk away like a specter did I ever appreciate how the Mayan's must have been stunned by the appearance of Cortez on horseback, and, never having seen a horse before, assumed that it was not two separate living things, but some miraculous man who could gallop at great speed on four legs when he chose, or separate himself into two sections and proceed on foot, - with two feet, - when he felt the impulse to lower himself to their own station.

And so, one of these nights, I am bound to go to the "theatre".

And today Clemence came to see me, - just before the Knipmayers arrived, bringing with her a picture she had painted for the scrapbook, - a sketch of Grandpere's house, in which she was living at the time it was destroyed by fire about 30 or 36 years ago. I am so glad to have this to go with the pencil sketches she has already dashed off, for only through her could we have such a record. Others there are who may remember it, and I shall refresh their memory for additional details about the place, its out buildings, etc., but none of them could draw, and since Clemence lived in the house, it is quite natural she can remember it distinctly. The place resembles Melrose in many respects so far as the general lines are concerned. The stairs, however, instead of being at the side, were in the middle of the front gallery, the windows placed higher and so on. It seems rather remarkable that this ante bellum home of the great-est of the mulatto planters should never have been recorded by camera or brush before this late date, doesn't it.

By and large, you might say, this seems to be an all colored letter. Perhaps we shall get around to the white folks at another sitting.....

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Friday, October 28th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Thirty million times would scarce suffice to tell you how enchanted was I to find your elegant letter awaiting me this morning. I might as well confess that Arenbourg was just as delighted, too, for it had looked for a while as though November might see things slowed up a bit, when Lo! the Lydia Lee of Lyme birthday greeting came to hand, and now all kinds of things are being formulated for November doings in the Department of Plants and Planting.

So many people have to await the advent of Heaven for their just reward. How fervently I pray you may get yours in the leafy shade where your devotion and unflagging interest is making "the desert to blossom like the rose".

Arenbourg sends thanks. So does Yucca, - and so much more, that only you can comprehend and understand.

And may I hasten to thank you for the elegant prints coming to hand. They will gladden so many hearts and will please me, too, for I shall snitch some for the Yucca scrapbook. Surely the Manhattan development and printing was ever so much finer than that attempted locally. I reckon Little Robert will be passing this way on the morrow or on Sunday, as will Peter and Log, and they will be enchanted at your gifts.

As for your letter, I know not where to begin, - there were so many things touching me so deeply and your exquisite reference to the anniversary falling due this week. That last day in 1939 was so sweet yet so sad, but somehow every day since has been so sweet and so glad, thanks to you.

And before going any further, let me admit that I couldn't believe my ears at one point in the letter wherein you referred to a certain document touching on Natchitoches. I asked Murrell to repeat it a second time, after which, to put it mildly, I just fell out of my chair. In view of all that has gone before about Marly and all that you have done to keep the light still burning in that direction I find it extraordinary that it should again happen you should be the agent to re-kindle the flame by discovering the document relating to doings with licquor, the tannery, etc., that forever ties up the Cane River country with that domaine of such excellence, now so long vanished.

And may I ask if Murrell read the date correctly, - the document

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concerning the tannery, Indian trading, etc., when he told me it was 1704. If that date be the correct one, it pushes the establishment of the place back further than usual, - by at least a decade. If you would care to check on this, I should be delighted. The name you mention, - it eludes me momentarily, as being in these papers considerably probably as translator, is a very capable person, - a woman, who at one time had something to do with the local college and who did much work in collaboration with the Madam. I believe the Madam considered her one of the most trustworthy research workers who ever labored in the Natchitoches files.

And from here I shall skip about to whatever comes to mind in other parts of your letter. You mention Henry Hertzog who married Miss Laura LeCompte or however the name it spelled. The LeComptes owned Magnolia and Mr. LeCompte who had married into the wealthy Buard family, had three daughters, one of whom married Mr. Alphonse Prudhomme, son of "Uncle Phanor", and the other two sons, - there were five in all, - married the two LeCompte girls. That is how Magnolia came into the possession of the Hertzog family. Mathieu or Mathew, was the other LeCompte son-in-law.

And thanks for telling me of the contents of the Aswell article. The Mary Gunn with parasol appearing in the article, is related to the Prudhommies in this fashion: the first Hertzog married a daughter of Antoine Prudhomme who lived where Bill Jones now lives. Two sons by this union, as indicated above, married LeCompte girls, and Mathew had a son, Ambrose, who married Miss Sally Hunter. Their children include the present generation, Mat, Dr. Ambrose, Marie Louise (married to a New Orleans physician) and "P'te Sal" who married Norman Gunn, mother of the girl in the Colliers article.

You mention the Broadcast article. It is still stewing both on paper and in my brain. I shall send the Pilgrim thing along when Ora returns it, and after she has pasted the Broadcast thing together, I shall send that along, too.

Perhaps I mentioned already that the tentative new title for the still uncooked Broadcast story is "Miracle in Mississippi". It will start off, - I have written some of it, - with a quotation from an interrupted news flash in the midst of a crooner program, the announcer stating that at long last, what the world has been awaiting for the past 2,000 years has occurred, - a report from "Ghotaw" Miss., brings news of the appearance of Christ in the streets of that city. The point of the whole article will be to show that while we have talked about and anticipated this event for 20 centuries, the immediate reaction of everyone is not at all along the lines such a remarkable event should produce, but rather, they merely continue to re-act in their same old way, so thoroughly accustomed are they to follow the age-old pattern of "you first, after me". I am trying to handle it lightly but with an underlying message of seriousness that may make the casual reader stop and ponder. If it could only be published, it ought to make a stunning piece for broadcast and Orson Wells and his men from Mars look tame beside it. And thanks again for a happy birthday for Arenbourg and you and me.....

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Sunday, October 30th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Throughout the week end my brain has been buzzing around the splendid letter which came to hand last Friday, and especially about the 1704 Marly document you mentioned. If the thing isn't too lengthy, and if you feel as I do, that it was issued for the Louisiana administration, it is a document of inordinate significance, as Harnett Kane would phrase it.

The fact that it was among the Natchitoches records suggests it was intended for the Louisiana rather than the Canadian seat of Government, - or both. Without stretching the point beyond credulity, it would seem we may alter the 1714 date in all the text books and re-set the type for all future broadsides put out by the various Louisiana Chambers of Commerce.

Whenever convenient, - and if you feel my assumption regarding the document to be correct, you might make a duplicate transcript of the Decree, on receipt of which I shall write a letter to the nearest office of the Associate Press, after which I might dash off an article for the Shreveport Times Magazine Section.

For if this Decree implies or indicates that Natchitoches was on the map in 1704; as opposed to the text book statements of 1714, the data would arouse as much interest in the Gulf States area as would the nation be startled if someone should find that it was in 1482 instead of 1492 that Columbus discovered America.

As building up rather than tearing down has always interested me in particular, I recall readily enough that Louis XIV was doing big things at Marly in 1704 but I don't recall precisely the dates of the War of the Spanish Succession. It seems to me, however, it was in full swing in 1704, however, Louis XIV contending against all Europe for control of the Spanish Crown, which exercised so much influence not only to the South of France, but also to its North and East and in the colonies, including the Red River basin and the mouth of the Mississippi.

But I am getting off the track, and will stop, but not before blessing you again for having mentioned this unexpected item. Strange, indeed, that it could have been read and even translated by people interested in history, - and yet somehow failed to register in their minds as an item of transcending importance.

In your letter you mentioned the marble slab. I thought it might be nice to have the word "Arenbourg" engraved on it, with an arrow passing through the "N" or just after the "N", dividing the name into two sections. I envision a brick pavement for the gallery at Arenbourg, on a curve, connecting les maisons de la

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de la reine and du seigneur. Off hand, marble and brick seem like a somewhat curious combination and yet the marble pillars Louis XIV used to grace the brick facade of the little brick hunting lodge of Louis XIII turned out a gem when the greater palace of Versailles expanded in every direction except where the brick recalled the earlier reign. I must say, too, that the marble slab set in the brick floor of the dining room at Melrose looks alright, too, and eventually I think we might like the same combination on the open gallery at Arenbourg.

And while I think of it, you inquired about the name of the armless girl in Natchitoches, - Mary Bell De Vargas. Her brother is the town jeweler and I met his wife last Monday afternoon at that social thing I attended.

On the home front, I picked up a bit of news from my assistant secretary who, during the past ten days, seems to have moved up almost to the rank of first and only secretary, what with Mr. Brew having failed to put in an appearance. Murrel told me in confidence that Mr. Brew showed him a letter yesterday that puzzled both of them. It was posted from the Rapides Health Department and advised Mr. Brew to consult Dr. Knipmayer every Saturday and Monday, following receipt of the letter. I believe it was signed by someone named Norris. I believe the Health head of the Rapides Parish Health Department is Dr. Norris, and I take it that Mr. Brew's wife, while attending the clinic in Alexandria in expectation of the birth of their first born, may have produced a positive reaction to certain blood tests, - hence the letter to her husband. Under no circumstances, naturally, shall I refer to Mr. Brew to Dr. Knipmayer, for I abhor the old Wenk practice of discussing colored people's health problems, but I'll bet dollars to doughnuts, the Natchitoches Parish Medical head will volunteer the information, and I shall seal off the topic at its inception. After all, I am a strong believer in permitting colored people to handle their own health problems individually as they see fit, and if Mr. Brew wants to weep on my shoulder, I shall be glad to dry his tears, and if he doesn't, he ought to have every right to keep his problems to himself. In the old days, this particular malady must have been a pretty serious matter for any victim, but now, according to Dr. Knipmayer, there is a drug and method being used that corrects the whole business within 36 hours of intensive treatment, so that both the mother and father of the child may well be back in the pink of condition before that old dawdling stork puts in an appearance.

The enclosures aren't much. I hastened to withdraw my request from Rudolph, urging him to give himself more rest. I said nothing, but I laughed in my beard at the "functional" reference, for it seems odd it is alright to make an African House to hold money but not to hold cigarettes or matches.....

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Monday, October 31st, 1949.

Memorandum:

No paper dollies today, but rather the curious outline you find confronting you.

Placing a persimmon on its side, I have drawn the line around it to give you some idea of its shape and size.

For ever so long in the past, and until I get the desired particulars, fruit experts will be appealed to with a hope of determining the name and possible origin of this particular type of persimmon. You will note that its shape rather suggests a glorified strawberry, as opposed to the globe like large ones in your shipment a week or two ago. Both in large and small, native and imported varieties of persimmons, the globe like shape is characteristic. No one who has ever examined this strawberry shaped type has seen anything like it and apparently it isn't registered or classified as yet. Before another year has rolled by, I hope to get the thing recorded, and, if as it appears, it is unnamed, I shall recommend Arenbourg, don't you think so.

A few of the oldsters in this region remember it as growing in an old garden across the river from Melrose on what was originally Metoyer property. It's the finest known fruit of its type in this region, and years ago people lamented the evident decline of the tree bearing this fruit. Perhaps a quarter of a century back, the Madam hit on the idea of trying to graft a couple of branches on a persimmon in the bulb garden at Melrose. Both grafts took and flourished. But now the same fate seems to be overtaking the old tree to which the graft was made, - old age, - that foretold the doom of the earlier one.

Puny is the local expert handler of such business, and so I have taken up the matter with him, and when March rolls around, we shall take a quantity of cuttings to the ice house storage in Natchitoches where pecane grafts are kept, and after Spring brings up the sap in the out of door trees, we shall graft these cuttings from the ancient tree, but plenty of them to the different variety young trees bordering the Arenbourg drive.

What we propose to do is to graft three or four cuttings to each of the Arenbourg persimmons, concentrating on the

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lower branches in all cases. In this way the small oriental and large native persimmons, of the identical variety as planted, will climb skyward and suspend their vermillion globes from on high, while below them, like an encircling crown of greater girth, will spread the branch laden fruit similar to the sketch.

I reckon we shall graft about 50 cuttings in all, and assuming at least half of them may "take", I think the ultimate effect should be charming. I hope you like the idea. It seems to me that if the individual trees do half as well as hoped for, the drive along in October ought to be something closely akin to a golden glory.

Last night, just after finishing our little conversation, I had moonlight pilgrims. It was the Piersons of Alexandria, rather charming people and a guest or two with them. There was no tour, but we had a pleasant hour's visit, and the big oak in the front garden was marvelously black and mysterious when I accompanied them to the gate.

This morning I telephoned the President of the Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce. He is coming to see me. He says a Ray Samuels of the Magazine Section of the Picayune is coming up this week and wants to come to see me, too. Mr. Samuels is fixing to do a December article on the Natchitoches holiday lighting display. I told Mr. Boyd there might be particulars coming to hand that would merit a re-survey of the town's date of founding. Obviously, what with the Melrose thing in the offing and the light parade scheduled for soon after, the Picayune will probably not contemplate a third article in such rapid succession on this locality. But perhaps the Shreveport Times might consider one. In the mean time, I think the Chamber of Commerce might consider having some pictures made to illustrate what I have in mind for the 1704 date, and I shall take that opportunity to get a few pictures of paintings snapped, too. I shall write the Louisiana Historical Society today, asking if their files don't have a picture of the Society's first President, Mr. Bullard, and if so, it is quite possible this may be the 1836 portrait I am casting about for. Possibly, if it should come to hand, something might be done pictorially of two prominent Natchitoches parish citizens of the ante bellum period, recorded in oil by the same artist. Or perhaps, if quite a few portraits could be photographed, an article on Natchitoches portraits of the ante bellum period might be worth considering. I know where the portrait is, - a delightful one, - of old Mr. Emanuel Prudhomme holding the first bowl of cotton produced in this region, along about 1804, and that would lend itself both as an item of interest in art and agriculture.

So things spin, and the days seem so short, what with the million things awaiting attention.....

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Tuesday, November 1st, 1949.

Memorandum:

Ice a quarter of an inch thick on the bird bath this morning. The day has been cloudless but marvelously cool.

And the post was as perfect as the day, for it brought me both your Tuesday and Friday letters, and a billion thanks for both.

There were two or three other pieces, including one from the Harnesses, but I haven't gotten around to them as yet, or to a complete survey of the Jefferson College article, which I am expecting to digest later tonight, as Mr. Brew threatens to pass this way to explain his dithering tactics. Parenthetically, J. H. tells me that Mr. Brew bought himself a \$350.00 1935 Ford on Saturday, and I suppose this junk pile on wheels, the new baby in the offing and all must have just been too much for him of late.

But Murrell remains faithful, and so things move along smoothly if slowly, and every word of your letters and the clippings have registered in that section of my heart reserved for appreciation and gratitude. I can't explain precisely how I feel about your disclaimer in regard to getting the painting thing under way, but let us compromise on the point with some such analogy as the hands of the clock without the works, the works without the hands being useless, while jointly the combination is perfect.

And thanks for sending the duplicate clipping in your characteristically thoughtful manner. Like you, so do I believe Miss Nellie will be ever so appreciative, knowing, as we do, how close Jefferson College is to her. I shall send it to her tonight. And by way of another parenthesis, I roar inwardly every time I think of that old business of a decade ago when everybody in the great houses in Natchez were stirring up a business, plotting for me to marry the gay widow Armstrong. Nobody seemed to take into account that the old Judge himself might have something to do with making the lady a widow, although anyone who would tie a string on a potential gift after his manner should have been tapped on the head years ago. The last time I chatted with him he was looking hale and hearty and good for another quarter of a century at least, and squabbling with me about colored people and how they were always trying to cheat him, - he with 50 millions to give away. In appearance he reminds me a little of Speaker Ransburn of Texas, white hair and a fine complexion. Thank the Lord the College said No to his catey offer. Better that it die of poverty than survive rich in Armstrong millions and all claim to intellectual or human aspirations thrown into the trash can.

And thanks for the

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picture of the Beloeil couple, Beloeil being near Burssels, I suppose the announcement was issued from the old family seat, and date lined from the capitol. Early in the morning I am going to take another good look at the clock you mention. There is one at Beloeil that has an ever so interesting history. It was originally executed for Madame de Pompadour and given by her to Frederick the Great whose study it adorned at Potsdam until the place was over run by Austrian troops in the 1780's, when the regiment of the Prince de Ligne took the place over, - de Ligne, of course, being a subject of the Austrian crown, and Potsdam preserved from ravage by him. On departing, or shortly thereafter, he received the thanks of Frederick for his civilized treatment of the place, and the Pompadour clock, which either had already gone, or was later sent, has henceforth decorated the salon at Beloeil. People in high places had such good manners in the 18th century, I used to think, when custard pies used to be heaved at Mr. Roosevelt's head from off Potsdam way in the 20th.

I'm so glad you saw the President when he passed your way, and thanks for telling me about Mrs. Roosevelt's birthday. Isn't it grand it was such a happy occasion.

Mrs. Rand came at 10 bringing three guests with her, to spend the day at the camp. We had coffee at Yucca, and at 1 I joined them (one o'clock) for lunch. But the day was so glorious and I had so much stuff I wanted to do in the Arenbourg section that I did not tarry. I must share this remarkable tale, related at table.

A gentile youth, Sam Dunbar, and a Jewish youth named Kaplan, graduated from Boulton High School in Alexandria this year. They entered Tulane, but were thrown out last week because both of them gave papers at the end of the I. Q. test that were identical in answers. Dr. Harris of Tulane refused to see the parents of either child in the case. Dr. Rand called a meeting of their Alexandria teachers, and received signatures of all which he carries with him to New Orleans on Friday to beard Dr. Harris and make him countermand the expulsion. It seems that Tulane, by a snap judgement, fumbled something marvelous and which the University might have capitalized on mightily, for by some inexplicable twist of mentalities, these two boys, in no way related, the one to the other, have always responded to questions in exactly the same way. In High School, just for certain, a teacher would sometimes prepare questions in duplicate, having one group of the class in one room, including the Dunbar boy, and the other in another room, including the Kaplan youth. Inevitably the papers handed in by the two youths were identical. Scant wonder, perhaps, that Dr. Harris missed the full appreciation of the phenomenon, but he should at least have accepted an explanation. But now, thanks to Dr. Rand, he is going to get one regardless, and may both youths be re-instated. So runs life, and mighty remarkable are some of its manifestations. It's been a happy day, thanks to your grand letters, and thank you millions and billions and goodnight.....

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Wednesday, October 2nd, 1949.

Memorandum:

The weather continues marvelous, and I found myself loath to tear myself away from gardening at Arenbourg this morning in order to come back here to bother with some pleasant but dumb pilgrims.

They were river bottom planters and successful, - the Rogiers, living between here and Bermuda. They are kindly people and sharp business people and withal successful from a business point of view, - but dull-dull, and I found myself forced for the hundredth time to think up some lie as to why it was impossible for me to accept an invitation to have dinner at their home. The truth of the matter is that the food, I am quite certain, would be marvelous, but it takes more food than I ever dreamed of to out-balance dull conversation with people whose every view point is entirely beyond anything I can comprehend.

On the way to the Post Office this morning, half way through the garden, I met my secretary face to face, toasting a water barrel, obviously on his way to the cistern. He put it down when he saw me, and said he wanted to tell me something. He explained that he had been so busy, --he ought to write Rudolph, what with fixing to have a baby in Alexandria, and operating his new 1935 car during the past couple of weeks that it just looked as though he couldn't find time to do anything. He said he thought he would have things, --meaning car and baby, I suppose, well in hand within a week, and he would be coming by if it would be alright. I think we shall resume operations on an alternating schedule for a while, something like an every other day basis, which may or may not, - and probably not, - have a vaguely salutary effect. And let me hasn't to record that there is no virtue whatsoever in the patience I seemingly display in this matter, for the sheer truth is that of all the people I know and can use as secretaries, only two of them know "A" from "B", and what with the non-chalance everyone of color in this area fades out of the pictures, at most unpredictable times, it is just as well that I take a page from J. H.'s pattern of plantation operation and thank my lucky stars I have at least two people who can read, since that means that there always may be a chance that one can be tracked down, after the in-coming mail has cooled off for a couple of days, unopened on my desk.

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I shall touch again on the matter of pensions and relief again, in view of subsequent information coming to hand.

Mrs. Coombs dropped by for a few minutes today to let me know that re-organizational changes in the local office will advance her to another job that will require her to concentrate her time on the rural area to the North of Natchitoches. I shall probably not find another social worker who will give such excellent service on my reading machine needs, and I shall miss seeing her, for she is a kindly person.

She told me that either the Federal or State funds have run low and that a cut is being made in monthly check payments to one particular group. We both were astonished at the group selected for the cut, --only those who are lame or ill. Thus the Madam Regards and Madam Williams remain quite secure in their accustomed monthly checks, and those ladies who are unwed but are inclined to raise bigger and better families without legal husbands, - or any husbands at all, will still enjoy the encouragement of an unaltered monthly allotment.

By and large, I think these payments for the most part are a step in the right direction, although I do not mean to imply that monthly checks should be so contrived as to encourage ladies to beget children in wholesale without financial assistance from the begetters of said babies. But as I view the thing from a long range viewpoint, I come to the conclusion that eventually there will be a scream against such high taxes on the part of the electorate that the politicians will be bound to hear, and an equally loud moan from the pensioners whose wails must likewise be given consideration. In the squeeze that results, it may well be that a heap of the vast oceans of natural wealth, oil, power, etc., which heretofore has been cornered and held for the enrichment of the few, may by force of circumstances be turned into the coffers of the State to make up the deficit which has been drained out by the welfare agencies, and if such a twist of things should take place, the whole wasteful business which we have been through would have been worthwhile, since unquestionably more people would actually suffer privation under such a system than have suffered heretofore during the outrageous despoilation of the nation's vast reservoirs of wealth by a mere handful of rugged individualists who too often like old Vanderbilt proceeded on the theory of "the public be damned".

You will find the enclosure interesting, - the account of doings in Texas. Why Dr. Miller should still contrive to marshal up a business under her physical handicaps and her advancing years, I can not imagine.....

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Thursday, November 3rd, 1949.

Memorandum:

The weather continues cool and cloudless, with the mornings elegant for gardening and the nights marvelous for stepping up and down the Arenbourg terrace briskly, what with the big old moon doing such a big business these nights.

Aside from stirring the ground with a stick, so to speak early in the day, the balance of the morning was busy enough to make dinner time arrive before I realized the morning was well under way.

Log came by early to ask my opinion about moving from Little River up to Cane River next year and to inquire if my grapevine knew of any houses between here and the spillway that might possibly be available. I did, and he left delighted at the toe-hold the information had provided.

Dr. Jaeger or Yaeger, or however, came by for a little chat shortly after I had come from the Post Office and a cup of coffee with Celeste who returned last evening with her Mother, following a week end of frolic in the Mansura area.

Then came the Knipmeyers for shop talk and general Parish gossip, and so the day got under way.

Murrel came by to give me a hand with the mail, and there wasn't much in the first class section, although there were a flock of clippings from Charles, along with the note enclosed herewith. I take it that if he can clip, he must be possessed of a little more energy than formerly. Isn't it a pity such a grand person has to be so flattened out, and withal unaided by what, if anything, medical knowledge might provide. I wish he were up here. I know he and the lady doctor would hit it off splendidly, and before he knew it, she might have performed a miracle in his behalf.

The Holloman letter isn't much, but it is interesting that she is casting about for another article. I have a half dozen up my sleeve which I shall not communicate to her, but

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I shall provide her with plenty of copy, - if and when I address the Rapides Parish Historical Society, and in spreading an account of my doings on a wide surface, she will provide me with contacts with many a reader in the Alexandria area whose paintings I want to learn about. Thus she will have had good material for her daily column and I will have projected the story I want to get across. Later, if things work to advantage for a Natchitoches Parish article for the Shreveport Times on painting, she can use my article, - after it has appeared in print, - for an article of similar bent on the Alexandria-Rapides aspects of the same subject and print it where she pleases.

In some of the shop talk between the two doctors, for the Cloutierville number lingered for a while after Dr. Knipmayer had arrived, was the latest slant of Scarlet Fever, of which there appears to be some cases about the Parish at the moment. It seems that as a sop to prejudice or custom or whatever, doctors incline to tell members of the family where the malady obtains not to mix with their neighbors. And this is done because the neighbors are perpetually in a panic if the quarantine isn't complete, whereas the latest viewpoint of the medical world is that scarlet fever isn't communicable except by direct contact with the patient and cannot be transmitted by any intermediary. This seems to be a far cry from the old days of big scarlet placards, yellow pest flags and heaven knows what all.

A book came to hand in yesterday's post which I sampled a bit before retiring last night. It is "On the Other Side of the Record" by Charles O'Connell. It is a well-phrased account of master musicians, opera, radio and screen stars with whom the author had to deal while in charge of the Victor Recording Company, a subsidiary of R. G. A. It seems to be an interesting statement of the difficulties confronting a business man in a position so intimately connected with people notoriously difficult to deal with. He takes Toscani apart pretty thoroughly, for one thing. He praises Eugene Ormandy, the only person thus far mentioned that I ever knew. I take it from this account that the Lily Pons-Andre Kastelanez combination is one of the big money makers of the musical world, which perhaps everyone knew, but I didn't, although the author suggests that some of their publicity scoops are of dubious taste when they used the Army entertainments through the medium of the Saturday Evening Post to build up their civilian prestige. I may not finish the book if something else comes along, but nevertheless I have enjoyed the first few pages. But my book review has run me out of space and so I shall fold.....

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Friday, November 4th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Another marvelous day, after a heavy fog had cleared this morning. A tight frost set everything to glistening before sun-up, but before full day had arrived a blanket of fog of such intensity formed that one could scarcely see a foot ahead.

Following a good work-out before breakfast and knocking off some non-descript mail, I was all prepared for a satisfactory morning until I had had a ten minute over the coffee cups. I was totally unprepared for a sudden announcement from Celeste that she thought Melrose ought to be closed, that Paynie's wife thought so too and so on and so on. The upshot of the whole business, I shortly discovered, was that some ancient lady in town had telephoned her to ask if she might bring down a friend to walk in the gardens on Saturday afternoon. Celeste, as is her custom, wanted to go to town to play bridge. I couldn't see what this had to do with the proposed visit, since the lady was no friend of hers and Celeste never shepherds any pilgrims, but that's the way her mind seems to work sometimes.

I thought of Jean Girardoux and his Helen of Troy who was a nitwit but who, through a certain set of circumstances, was the final feather that broke the camel's back and inaugurated the disastrous Trojan war.

She spoke of Mrs. Rand and inquired if any interesting people had come with her to the camp on Tuesday. I mentioned one lady whom she said she was sure I would like. I told her I thought the lady charming. Then and there she said she felt sure I would like her, for she had known her a long time and found her possessed "of one of the best brains" she had ever known, "in fact I think there is no one equal to her in intelligence, for I have played cards with her sometimes, and she certainly plays the best hand of bridge of anyone I know".

Wouldn't you and Dr. Butler and I have fun with that one, the three of us having our heads together over a toddy.

Paynie had some guests for dinner and Mrs. Coombs passed by and I asked her to break bread with us. She had had a painful morning, having to decide where and on whom the axe would fall among her relief people, - "those who are lame or ill", while the dowagers remain doubly secure. She has been assigned

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a new position which will place a different type of work in her hands, - emergency stuff, I believe, and so I shall probably not see her much henceforth. She took such excellent care of matters pertaining to the Reading Machine, I reckon I'll be lucky if I find another who will execute the business with such dispatch

Dinner talk revealed a few interesting particulars which are probably sound, as they came from business men well acquainted with doings in this Parish. They were speaking of the extensive planting done by various people, and I asked if J. H. Williams was not the largest land owner in the Natchitoches. They said he was not, although he and his brother (Ora's husband) R. B. were undoubtedly the most extensive planters, considering the amount of land aside from their own holdings that they rent and plant. It seemed to be generally agreed that the largest individual land owner in the Parish was not J. H. Williams but J. H. Henry, --all of which, of course, with a nickle, would buy one a cup of coffee.

This afternoon there were a couple of pilgrims from Oklahoma, and one of them showed me an old book, picked up in New Orleans, that had been published in 1864, in Baltimore, I believe. It was one of those "polite ladies' books" so popular at the time, devoted to everything and nothing, -art of deportment, information for the curious about curious subjects, a collection of the ten best sermons, hints on household management such as how to get a spot of grease out of a doily, famous epitaphs, including Jefferson's, and quotations from odd wedding announcements in the English newspapers of the 1750's. In the latter category was a marvelous one, wherein was listed the preparations being made for a public wedding for a man advertising for a wife, and promising to favor the first comer. The date for the wedding and ensuing folic was carefully noted, and in what appeared to be a serious and altogether pious frame of mind, the prospective groom appealed to the Almighty for His blessing, and in conclusion expressed the hope that "no mis-carriage may prevent my marriage", which I thought was a little on the hilarious side.

Long before this, I intended referring to your mention of Lillian Smith and certain of her most recent observations. I never did read "Strange Fruit" but want to eventually. Curiously enough, through some mental process I should like to follow through, her name came to mind tonight when Murrel spoke of one of his friends, Tom Bloodworth, who seemed like a wonderful name for a negro, and so now it brought Miss Smith's name to the surface forthwith. I don't believe I ever heard Mr. Pipes express himself of "Strange Fruit". I think I shall ask him about it, while I, in the mean time, continue to formulate plans for grafting the remarkable persimmons from the a cient garden on to an Arenberg setting.....

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Sunday, November 6th, 1949.

Memorandum:

"Look, Mr. Francois is I right or is him. When I'se comin' up the road and he's a-comin' down the road, ain't he supposed to say Howdy first, and if he don't say nuthin' first, then I ain't supposed to say nuthin'. Ain't that right."

What with this being flat country, up and down the road, you understand, seems to be determined by a variety of considerations.

But such was the excited question put to me 20 minutes ago when I responded to a tap on my window. It was Peter and Olivier, Maybelle's husband. The full moon had already turned the white sun dial into a pillar of snow and Sunday night was getting under full sail, with my decision sought in settling a matter, basically having nothing to do with such a fine point, but the momentary results of the word from this oracle had been pre-determined to decide if one or the other had been lacking in a matter of delicacy in personal contact on the big road.

To quote the Madam, "those niggers are sights", - but frantically serious and the cutting or beating that was hanging on such a slender thread impelled one to hope the proper decision would be forth coming. I chanced to have a couple of glasses of cold milk in the house, and I made each of them drink the same before I would go into the matter. It's wonderful, sometimes, what a cold glass of milk and a cigarette will do to cool high tension, and it worked, - and for the life of me, - and especially for them, I can't recall which way the cat did jump, and it really didn't matter, so long as they left feeling less pugnacious, but sooner or later, and I hope it may be later, one or the other is going to mess up the other.

And somehow it almost seems as though the scent of blood in the air carries far and excites further spilling if labor or laughter isn't interjected to eradicate the scent. Tonight Jake Cohen and his son, Coon Sam Cohen, - respectively son and grandson of Mr. Hyman Cohen, mulattoes of course. Last night at T. Frere Duluche's honkey-tonk below Cloutierville, the two killed a colored boy, once by strangling him, and three times by shooting him, - and nobody inside the honkey tonk hesitated in their jitter-bugging to stop long enough to view the corpse. In fine, it was a gay week end in the colored section.

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The weather continues chill and bright, and today saw too many pilgrims. I dined with J. H. and Celeste, Frances and Madam Regard. In the afternoon there were professors from the college, some Suttons six strong from town, some lady or other whom the Madam didn't like much who wanted to consult me about doing the Madam's biography, some Rural Electrification executives from Oklahoma and I guess that was all. They consumed the afternoon, but I was glad to see everyone, for each had something or other I wanted to know, and with Miss Bowman, the would-be biographer, I straightened out a vague crinkle that had been worrying Celeste, and by taking up the matter with the two ladies in each other's company, it was nice to know that they were all delighted with the results, and everybody parted in the gayest of moods.

I did a little reading last night from another unordered volume, - "The South West" by Ferguson, which is something of a literary Federal Guide account of that elusive section which used to be Ohio and Kentucky but now seems to be mostly Arizona and New Mexico. There is an interesting account of various museums in that region, devoted to the preservation of the various Indian cultures that thrived there long before the advent of the Spaniards in 1540. I should like to see some of the frescoes and murals done in that region, it is thought, about 1275 to 1300, even though the few Indians I have known don't do much to excite my interest in them individually.

The enclosure from Miss Nellie is good news, although not in her usual style. I am not sure, - if may be the fault of my secretary, but anyhow I am not certain if she plans to remain in Mississippi or is merely coming to wind up some of her business. I shall drop her a little note to Vicksburg, and shall start "holding the thought" that she may find an apartment in Natchez, for I have a feeling she would be happier there than in Atlanta.

At dinner I learned that the Ethel Corporation is doing some vast entertaining in New Orleans during the Thanksgiving week end, which meets with my fullest approval, for the holiday season is sufficient to anticipate, what with other passers by scheduled to arrive toward the end of the month or early in December, including the harnesses.

I have an idea I may get down one day this week. I with she would hurry up with that pilgrim thing for it seems to be getting late for possible use this Spring. And now I shall gird up my loins and pass by Arenbourg, just to see by moonlight what I want to undertake at tomorrow's dawn. A cup of hot tenderleaf on my return and thence to sleep.....

3904

Monday, November 7th, 1949.

Memorandum:

And so, having in mind not only certain reparations required to keep Yucca from caving in, but also some work I wanted done at Arenbourg, I girded up my loins before sun up and marched to the store to see J. H.

I opened by ante-breakfast conference by asking him what the dental charges had amounted to during the past year. He said he hadn't the vaguest idea and that anyway they had long since been charged off. I said I had in mind to settle the matter, but he assured me that had been more than settled on my part long before the current year. I told him I was glad for I proposed to invest some money in something else, - the jacking up of Yucca which had been so poorly attempted last Spring that it was back in the same condition now. And in so doing, I took the two hundred dollar check out of my pocket and asked for a pen to endorse it. He protested and said Melrose would fix the old house. I told him that I would assist in the matter. He said that was unthinkable, but I did not subscribe, knowing full well that unless pressure were applied, the reparations would dwindle along too long, and, confidentially, I wanted some of the unused materials for "us-es" at Arenbourg. Then J. H. suggested I use the check to start a bank account. I gasped a little dramatically at that, remarking it would be a crime to do so, what with one thing and another, had I found myself possessed of such a sum, I would do much better to pay off some of my various minor indebtednesses. And so, under his protest, I endorsed the check and turned it over to him. Yucca will be put back in shape within the next month or two and work at Arenbourg will go quietly along, disking, fertilizing and so on. J. H. accepted the check only with the understanding that I would consider it as being held in my behalf. I turned it over with the understanding that it was to be accepted only as evidence against any member of the Estate who might feel that Estate money was being used to preserve and perpetuate Yucca. And that is where the matter stands, and, if I may say so, I think it represents an excellent investment, likely to pay off dividends far in excess of the actual investment itself.

As for the two hundred dollars, that came to hand from the Suttons who brought it to me on Sunday. It was kind

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of them to make this gesture, which may have been wholly genuine and sincere on their part, knowing as they do that Mr. Bachelier originally had me in mind as his heir. As they were not mentioned in his will, it would seem at first glance as though they had actually gone into their own pockets and produced their own money to effect Mr. Bachelier's desire. It must be admitted however, that while Mr. Bachelier was at their home, between his first visit to the hospital and his return there to demonstrate in several ways that his mind was out of order, the Suttons did effect a purchase of some 30 odd acres of valuable land Mr. Bachelier owned in Natchitoches, and while the deed was effectively executed and registered, no money was exchanged for the property, and so the Suttons are the richer by several thousand dollars through this very timely transaction, and Father Becker is removed from swallowing that parcel of Bachelier property. And it is possible that if I had secured several thousand dollars worth of property from Mr. Bachelier without paying a cent for it, I, too, might feel it a kind thing to do, or a wise thing to do or both, or even all this and other considerations, to do as they have done.

As for myself, I could get nothing by legal action, but by accepting the two hundred dollars, Yucca and Arenbourg will profit thereby, and since I didn't have the money on Saturday, and frankly didn't expect a nickel, I really lost nothing by turning it over immediately to the Estate, and by doing so, I have not only guaranteed a longer lease on life for Yucca but have thus provided the means for more horticultural foundations for Arenbourg which, in years to come, I trust, will show the sagement of the investment was sound.

You will forgive me for going into such a lengthy diatribe on this matter which concerns such a small amount of money but which, I trust you will agree, promises a sufficiently promising prospect as to justify all this talk. In short, we are no richer financial on Monday than we were on Saturday, measured in dollars, but I hope we have lost nothing and probably have invested well from a long view of things.

Madam Rand telephoned me yesterday, asking if January 2nd would be a convenient day for me to speak in Alexandria. Two societies are contending for that date, and she leaves it to me to select the one I want to address. I believe the D. A. R. - imagine me tangled up with that hide-bound bevy of stiff-necks, - I believe they have the larger and more energetic organization to carry out my wishes in effecting a listing of the art treasures of Rapides Parish, in which Alexandria is situated, and so I shall decide by Thursday of this week, and make plans accordingly. The weather continues chill but sunny. It gives me much pep to further the digging and planting and general carryings-on....

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Tuesday, November 8th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Another grand day, not the least reason being the precious air mail coming to hand in this morning's post.

But I have failed in thoughtfulness in not urging you not to attempt correspondence during such busy times as you are going through. What with all the swirl of half the Americas upon your citadel, I pray you to conserve every moment for relaxation and rest, always in full realization that I understand perfectly. And while on the subject, let me add to this recommendation my hope that as the holiday season approaches and the million demands inside and outside both business and domestic, please don't try to write, save perhaps an occasional card, and that will let me know things are rocking along, and then, after the turn of the New Year when things slow up a little, you will find an occasional moment when our conversations may be resumed, and in the mean time, I shall continue to do all the talking, thus affording me that unusual pleasure the Madam always said came to the one who monopolizes conversation, and you can "rest your eyes" when opportunity presents itself, and nobody will know if my talk is keeping you awake or not.

The weather is so marvelous that I feel bubbling over with energy to dig, and dig I do with gusto. The mornings remain chilly, but the sun warms things up later in the day, and all the various assortment of bees at Arenbourg seem too stiff early in the day to make any protest at my carryings on.

When I see Celeste in the morning, I must tell her she and I have excellent grounds for a slander suit against "old Virginie". For I talked with both Dormons today, and found them much as a year ago, only more so.

While Murrel was assisting me with mail this noon, Lo! my "first" secretary arrived. He said he would like to resume "secretarying" again. I shall find employment for him, but I shall not relinquish Murrel for whom I shall reserve the easier pieces, and Heaven alone knows how long Mr. Brew may last, what with the new baby not as yet arrived and the Ford, ever a potential Pegasus on which my amanuensis may take to the big road. And then Peter dropped in to say Howdy, and probably to see if an extra piece of corn bread was hanging about, dying to be eaten, when, Lo! came the sisters Dormon, together with Mrs. Storm, the South Carolina lady whom Caroline visited in the Spring. They all remained about 10 minutes, and we talked enough to cover a sitting of two hours than civilized people would normally require.

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I discovered that Mrs. Storm is acquainted with several of my old friends in Charleston and I really should have liked to receive news from them through this medium, but that was impossible with Caroline going a mile a minute. Old "Virginie" lagged behind in the big house, I assumed to go to the bath room, but when she joined us at Yucca for coffee, she said she had been prowling about upstairs in the big house, and "it looks just as it did when the Madam was alive".

Now that is the line which the months of labor I devoted to the place, plus the shining up processes of Celeste ought to provide us with excellent grounds for suit. But I guess we shall end up by calling our efforts mere "psalms to a dead mule".

Caroline asked me if I had heard from Robina lately. I lied. She said that there is something wrong with Robina, she isn't the same person she was, doesn't write letters nearly so much as formerly. What did I think was wrong. I thought Caroline and I were letting down as pen pushers. She through a fit right then and there.

She wanted Mrs. Storm to see the inside of the African House. There she pointed out the "loom where Miss Cammie did all her weaving". Miss Cammie never had a loom in the building. Caroline never saw that the books and chickens had been moved out and that a museum had been moved in. That's the trouble with Caroline, I guess, never seeing anything much. Naturally I called her attention to nothing. No telling to whom she will write, saying how exactly like the old days is Melrose, - or that it is so completely altered, she couldn't recognize the place.

She asked me if I had seen or talked with the lady doctor lately. I lied and said No, although in reality I had telephoned her an hour before to wish her a happy birthday, which is today. Caroline said she and Dr. Eleanor had conspired and that the station wagon with the Worsleys is going to pass this way in a few days, and I shall be picked up and whisked away to Briarwood for the day. That will be a good piece of work, too, but I'll let you know when it happens.

And in a trice, the Dormons and guest were gone, and Mrs. Coombs dropped by, followed by Billy Hinton, wife and two children, the Hintons remaining for a day or two at Melrose, I believe.

Somehow between shaving and suffer, I managed to get in a few licks at the pre-foundation labors on Yucca, and what with night overtaking me before making a last round to Arenbourg, I find myself ready to call it a day, after a little reading. On Thursday, the clerk is going to New Orleans for the day. J. H. and whoever assists at the mail usually contrive to put the Post Office in a perfect mare's nest, and unless I can hand my mail on Thursday morning directly to the Postman, I may hold up posting Wednesday's Memor until Friday, so don't be surprised if there should be a slow up or a day's interval. I had I told the author I liked "A C.

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Wednesday, November 9th, 1949.

Memorandum:

What with the weather being fine, the clerk departed for New Orleans and the Hintons gone, I find myself quite alone on the plantation, and ready for a little chat.

Tonight I should like to dwell a little on what might be styled, for want of better name, "The Alexandria Project".

In lieu of a letter from Lansford, - and that phrase sounds as though I were going to burst into an ode, - but since none has come to hand, I have decided to go ahead with my own project without the Delgado's contribution of ideas. Once my formulas have taken shape, I may alter it to embrace some of his suggestions, but from here on, it will not be a case of joint construction, as I had at first envisioned, but the thing planned out according to my concepts, and strengthened or broadened if and when additional suggestions come to hand.

It strikes me as might odd that I should be studying up how I can put the Daughters of the American Revolution to work to carry out my plans, but such seems to be the case, and this is the way I propose to effect it:

As you know, what I want to do is to effect a listing of the whole nation's paintings of merit. The Federal Government had the same idea, but the scheme fell through. It certainly sounds pretentious enough for me to undertake single-handedly what the Government failed to carry out, but if the thing can be properly launched, it seems to me it ought to be as easy as one, two three.

At their request, I shall speak to the Rapides chapter of the D. A. R. in Alexandria on January 2nd. I shall advise them in advance that my subject will be Painting.

I shall tell Mrs. Rand or no one what I actually have in mind. But when the meeting gets under way, I shall concede a point by introducing the talk with a superficial glance at some artist treasure, some of them with historic attributes, that exist in Central Louisiana. After that I shall launch slap out into deep water, offering the Alexandria chapter the honor of inaugurating a pattern for the Louisiana Parishes, and all the chapters outside Louisiana in the various

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city and county branches throughout the nation of effecting the same survey which the Alexandria chapter will be the first to undertake. Having such a nation wide organization, supposedly devoted in part, at least, to interest in historical matters, the thing should have no difficulty in being accomplished within a relatively short time, all country records cleared through the central State Chapter, which, in turn, will forward their records to the chapter, - Alexandria if it wants it, Washington, if that seems better, since Marion Anderson is not using Constitutional Hall, - or, should the Landsford contact be established between now and the first of the year, possible through the Delgado which may have adequate facilities for handling the whole business.

There ought to be glory enough all around for everyone, the Alexandria chapter for inaugurating the thing, the national organization for having, through its coverage of the country by its individual cells, accomplishing an Art survey of the United States, the Delgado, - or whatever organization, for rigging the data up alphabetically, and making it available for institutions throughout the world.

I think I sent you a carbon of my last letter to Mr. Lansford, and suggesting cards that would be suitable for filling in desired information:

Name of artist
subject of painting
date
where painted and for whom, if known
present owner and location of painting.

and most important, space provided on the card for remarks about any painting of uncertain subject or brush, its address of present owner, - and possible paintings, portrait, etc., or murals, that have been heard of, but whose present situation is unknown.

I believe the interest this inventory will arouse throughout many sections will stimulate an interest not only in earlier portraits and painting but will at the same time quicken many people to concern themselves more attentively to other manifestations of Art and what I hope, to tend to bring about county or parish exhibitions of old canvasases, and inspire many a D. A. R. dowager and her less stiff-necked neighbor to patronize contemporary artists the more.

And now, having bored you to extinction, or set you actively to worrying about my own sanity, I had better break off. Too often a wayward child is wayward because his energies aren't turned to something constructive. So I hope to turn the wayward D.A.D. girls...

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Thursday, November 10th, '49.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your big envelope in this morning's post, and how kind of you to have transcribed so many things for my delectation.

You ask about the section covering the genealogy, but I would ask that you not make that transcription at the present time as I lack the proper contacts to make an intelligent exploration of that table at the present time.

I have not as yet had an opportunity to explore the entire contents of today's post, but find the documents I did look into most interesting. I believe we are most fortunate to have these transcriptions from the original since I have a feeling that many of the original papers from which they were translated have subsequently been destroyed through stupidity on the part of various hill billy politicians, in a "clean up" of the Court House records, and many that escaped destruction, I believe, have now been removed, - gradually, - and sold, I believe, to L. S. U. library. I am not quite sure of the latter surmise but I believe it to be correct. Without too much guessing, you may easily guess who may have indulged in the latter transactions, and while such doings is most certainly not ethical, still, on the other hand, I can't bemoan their removal as such, - since this extra-legal method may be the only thing that will preserve many which constitute about the only good perspective we have of the regional past. I attribute the illegal removal to influences set afoot by Pual Veidth, but as he is no longer in business, I believe his former associate, may have been the instrument by which these papers found a safer resting place, although the motive for their removal and the receipt of money for the same seems to me to be of dubious virtue if not, indeed, downright chicanery. Life was so wonderful when one was a child and right was right and wrong was wrong, but confusion came with the years when one had to measure weightier considerations and decide if "lifting" something to save it fell into the one category or the other.

Your transcriptions, of course, automatically made me want to know something more about old St. Denis, for I know nothing at all about him. His biography by Ruth Cross, - written at Melrose, - is said to be a serious study of the man, although it was my understanding from the Madam that the writing itself was rather labored and accordingly not very readable. It seems odd, speaking of Ruth Cross, that we haven't heard from her

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since the death of her husband who died about 6 month or so before the Madam. It seems to me she wrote once, following his death, or when he was quite ill, - from the Paterno Apartments in the Pinehurst Avenue neighborhood, somewhere in the 180th Street section, near The Cloisters, but we have n't heard a peep since. She has a sister living in Winfield, some 35 miles to the East of here, but I don't recall her name, and what with a couple of other things to do, I haven't taken time to communicate with anyone who can tell me that lady's name.

The weather has turned warm-warm, and so I suppose there must be some rain in the offing, although there are billions of stars tonight. But if rain does come, it will mean I shall be able to round up a couple of secretaries the easier, and I have ample work laid out, if and when the first rain drop comes scurrying down. The unexpected frosts of a week or two ago gave a marvelous yellow-orange cast to the banana leaves and in their color I gloried at Arenbourg today, when I sat down to rest for a moment and discovered their wonderfully mellow light as the sun slanted through. This year, contrary to last year's doings, I think I shall not cut down the stalks, going on the assumption that we may have already had our hardest freeze for the season. This will enable the plants to get off at an advantage in the Spring, and so come into flower early enough in the summer to produce some fruit, which they did not do this year.

I am reading a book by Herbert Surwin, or some such name, which is entitled "These Are The Mexicans", and aptly it comes to hand, what with just having finished the volume on "Our SouthWest". The Mexican thing has a nice balance between glimpses of the nation's history and its contemporary economic problems, and I think I am going to like it. It is read by John Knight whose voice I haven't heard since last reading "The Cathedral" by Hugh Walpole. And the mention of that name reminds me of something I read in O'Connell's "On The Other Side of the Record". It seems that Mr. and Mrs. Mechior (I have forgotten how to spell that singer's name), were visiting the English author at his country place in England where something almost unforgivable transpired. It seems the author and host suffered from dysentery or some such, requiring him to spend considerable time in his bathroom where he had a bookshelf constructed. On this, he placed many of his favorite books, including some very rare editions which he consulted from time to time when thus closeted alone. But the singer's widow, using said bathroom, and finding the place temporarily out of toilet tissue, used several sheets torn at random from what looked like a messy old book, which, of course, turned out to be one of the rarest volumes in the collection, - which, among other things, is certainly a sight.

Unofficially it is said funds in small denominations are pouring in on Jefferson College, thanks to the outrageous dings of old Judge Armstrong. Like old Spellman, the old Judge perhaps set in motion something so far better than he ever expected that he could now kick himself, - with Cardinal Francis, around the block.....

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Friday, November 11th, 1949.

A holiday, no doubt, and I hope it was in Manhattan.

The plantation was never busier and I haven't had so many pilgrims in months. I hope there will be no more before tomorrow, what with the hour being at 9, but one never knows. I bumped into five, and Dr. Young, and so on, somewhere between the big house and Yucca after first dark when I was returning from supper. I wonder what impells people to crash about at sight-seeing in the bushes when it is really dark.

But the holiday at the College gave Ora an opportunity to drop by for an hour this afternoon. She is going to re-number the paragraphs of the pilgrim thing, and mail it to me, and I shall pass it along and you can look it over to see if there appears to be anything left of it.

I need scarcely point out that I fell out of my chair when she asked me if I knew three dowagers from Shreveport, all adrip with diamonds and oil, who journeyed to Natchitoches to ask her for an idea this week. Their names were known to me only by hear-say. They are members of the Colonial Dames of America, a vaguely more ultra conservative group than the D. A. R., both of which societies Mrs. Rand happens to be a member of without ever having been corrupted thereby.

Ora said they had come to her with a problem: - the Colonial Dames, - through its headquarters in Washington, is planning to comb the country in search of some project on which they are prepared to spend some money. Whatever the thing is should be national in scope. Each State group of the Society holds a convention shortly, - Louisiana's scheduled for New Orleans shortly, - where the various chapters will submit their ideas for a project, and the one finally decide upon will be forwarded to Washington where a Committee will decide which, out of the 48, is most suited to the efforts of these high born, bored dames, and then, when one has been selected, the wheels will be set in motion.

Such a coincidence, coming so hard on the heels of the Alexandria Project, as sketched in my recent Memo, had a

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stunning effect on me, naturally.

But I think I don't want to toss my project to the Colonial Dames who are too rarefied an organization, and lack the adequate number of cells across the nation to make what I envision for the D. A. R. as coming more within the latter's scope. I burden you with this endless rigamarole merely to share with you this rather astonishing coincidence, - the conception of and idea coming, apparently, at just the moment a thousand discontented bags are milling about the country in frantic search for some such. Extraordinary, don't you think, especially the time element.

Naturally I am enchanted to have this information, for now that I know of the actual desire of one group, I can use that wish as a cudgel over the heads of the over-stuffed D. A. R. ladies, should they tend to show luke-warmness to the presentation of my presentation of the Alexandria project. Be that as it may, I shall continue to divulge the plan to no one but you until the day for spilling the thing in public has arrived. I shall put Mrs. Holloman to work at that meeting and possibly write copy for her in advance, for it might be news for the Associated Press if it should be announced over the wires that the D. A. R. will undertake a survey which the Federal Government started and failed to carry through. I shall not attempt to stampede the Alexandria chapter into an immediate adoption of the project, but if they want to toy with the idea, they might foist the thing onto the whole nationwide organization before those stiff-necked bags have fully realized what has struck them. Can you imagine what a laugh all this would give Madam Roosevelt.

Well, so much for all that.

But swinging away from the coincidental to the paradoxical, it seems odd indeed these days to witness Melrose, "the largest pecan plantation in the world", actually buying pecan seed up and down the river to send to various business associates of the merchant-planter. Surely there could be more telling comment on the up-side-down situation of this year's crop failure. I read a page or two more from "These Are The Mexicans" and I like it. One or two old and familiar names appear in the volume: Franz Blum is quoted as an authority on Mayan or Aztec ruins and Bill Spratling is given space, not only as a prime mover in the revival of the silversmith trade but also as patron of contemporary painting. It just occurs to me that Nathalie Scott must have told Bill of the Madam's death, but possibly Franz was never advised. I might write him in Mexico City. And I must write to good old Postell who has certainly been having a bad run of luck, - five children and an unruly appendix.....

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Sunday, November 13th, 1949.

Memorandum:

It has been so many years since I have done any reading of 18th century reading that I had better begin brushing up on my Bourbon geneology, - although I wouldn't know how I might undertake it.

If memory serves, La Princesse de Conti was the daughter of the King and Madame de Montespan, and it occurred to me this afternoon that I never did do much research on the career of that personage, although it is possible all the historians skipped over her briefly in favor of her brother, the Duc de Maine.

Be that as it may, another Madam de Montespan passed along Cane River this afternoon. I chanced to be in the front garden and she descended from her carrosse and asked if she might walk about the place with a friend, a Mrs. Lecombe who turned out to be a very dull person. But what interested me was a third person who also descended from the elegant carrosse, a sort of little Princesse de Conti, she seemed. I gathered her age to be about 12. She was not formally presented and I don't know her name. She was a clever little girl and seemed to know much about local lore. When I handed the ladies back into their coach, the little girl told me she was having a birthday party on January 31st and she would like to have me come down to Alexandria to assist, and then she added, and she certainly had had no opportunity for any prompting:

"Do you know your eyes remind me of someone, and I'll bet you could guess whose."

I couldn't guess.

"J. H.'s."

Well, you could have knocked me down with a fender.

I don't mean to ascribe any parentage to the child, for what relation she was to the party or individuals making up the same, I haven't the vaguest notion. Still her acquaintance with Cane River personalities was striking and did serve to recall to mind some 17th and 18th century family history that I ought to brush up on once more.

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The weather is even much cooler, --ever so much like autumn at long last. Saturday brought an ample supply of pilgrims but none of them remains fixed in my memory very distinctly except a Mr. and Mrs. Sturgeon of Washington and curiously enough a man, whose name momentarily eludes me from a Natchitoches bank whom I met once last Spring when a couple of hundred other people were about. I invited him to come back sometime when I was unencumbered. Later, after he had left, I learned from J. H. that the man is quite an interesting person and that he has at one time or another spent considerable time in Iowa where Henry Wallace asked him to commune with him at his home, I believe in the days when Mr. Wallace was Secretary or Agriculture or Vice President, or possibly both. I shall be interested to learn this man's impressions of Mr. Wallace and some details about his domestic lay out.

The Rands didn't get up today but I talked with them on the telephone and they are alright but bogged down with personal matters. Dr. Rand spoke of the persimmon of which I spoke so exhaustively in a recent Memo. He said its identity was unknown to him and that he, too, had written Dr. Nelson, the horticulturalist, regarding the matter and that I would no doubt hear from the latter shortly.

I got an opportunity to do some reading last night, and shall probably finish "These are the Mexicans" tonight. I find it a good book and it has given me a better all-over concept of the country and its people than I have had before. I am at present in the midst of the chapter on the Catholic Church in Mexico. I am glad to have this account of the matter, for I missed much of the doings that transpired during the late 1930's, and this provides an excellent large sweep of the doings of the Church from 1519 forward, and it is a pretty sorry business all in all. Among other things, I take it, Mexico had altogether too many "Father Beckers" saddled on their economic life, and anybody knows Father Beckers are never very helpful except to themselves.

So unwinds another week end and I am impatient for tomorrow's dawn over Arenbourg where I have a billion things I want to scuffle around and about.....

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Monday, November 14th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The enclosures speak for themselves.

How unimaginative, how tacky, "the Loyalty Chapter", and how skittable for stupidity for the D. A. R. to have selected such a title. But if I can put them to counting old masters instead of harassing Miss Anderson, my association with them will not have been in vain.

As for Caroline Ramsey, I shall drop her a line tonight, saying that her post card is elegant but that I place no trust in her threat to return to the Gulf area to "stay put". And that brief statement will be all that I shall write, while secretly I shall continue to hope that she may in reality establish herself in the Marshal area, for that would enable her to pass this way occasionally, and I think might enable us to undertake a picture book or two. During the past summer, I noticed lots of interesting shadow studies and I envision the possibility of a plantation picture book made up of alternating pictures of people and things as they actually are, and an accompanying photograph of each in shadow form. I think Caroline, or rather Carolyn, is one photographically minded person who could do it, and, of course, backed by the State Departments batteries, she really ought to do them handsomely. Once, for example, I snapped a picture of 8 or 10 of my colored friends, all perched on the top rail of a fence, and then immediately afterward, I joined them on the top rail and snapped a picture of their shadows and that of the fence, as reflected on the dusty road hard by. The greensward before the African House is pretty enough in full sun sunshine, but is doubly delicious when the persimmons, Chinese magnolias and pecanias have traced their elongated likenesses on the self same grass. People, animals, buildings, trees, plants and even landscapes somehow lend themselves magnificently to striking impressions of their dual personalities, and, should the subjects be of sufficient interest and progressively arranged, I think the whole composition might be marvelous. It will be something Carolyn can keep in mind for shooting whenever the proper subjects come to view, and a final concentration as to place can be finally

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selected and recorded for all the other double shots to be strung onto.

At the same time, of course, she should be the one to do the story of Emma in pictures, which ought to make a plantation complete in pictures and a knock-out. But keeping Carolyn in one place and on one job is something else again, and so I shall merely try to point out the stuff, and if, by some miracle, she takes a few and I can paste them together with a few I have, then perhaps something might be attempted in spite of her tendency to fade out of the picture at just the wrong moment.

On the home front my entire day turned out quite differently from what I had planned. That's the nice thing about making plans, it is always such a surprise when a schedule, prepared in advance, actually comes to fruition. I did get in a few licks at Arenbourg at dawn but right after breakfast, I had to devote myself to marking shrubs and plants at Melrose that are ear-marked for transplanting in various localities, and then a flock of pilgrims stole up on me before I could get lost in the bamboo. Celeste invited me to some kind of a doings at her house this afternoon, but naturally, I declined, what with a billion things I had in mind to undertake. We had a couple of guests for dinner but no one of any interest, and tonight Eugene and I supped alone, J. H. being in Alexandria, it was said.

I finished the Gerwin book on Mexico last night and liked it, and tonight I find myself without any books from the N. O. P. L., and my letters to that institution seem to bear little conviction so far as persuading them that I really want stuff to read. Two or three weeks ago my radio blew out, what with an unexpected surge of current on the high power line through this region that blew out all the honkey-tonk music boxes, movie projectors and so on. I thought I might do without the radio for a while, but what with the Reading Machine wanting records, I have about made up my mind I had better get the radio rigged up again, for it certainly is stupid being cut off from news of what goes on in the world, and in view of my impending gardening activities, I do want to find out which way the wind is going to blow and when impending freeze start heading this way. And so I sent my machine to town tonight, and within a week or so, I ought to be able to find out if the Steel Strike has been concluded and what, if anything, the Bible slappers are up to.

I have intended mentioning some of the lovely things appearing in Life of late, The Hapsburg Collection and so on, not to mention those extraordinary heads and necks of the ostriches, but you have seen them all and I am running out of soap, and so I shall fold forthwith.....

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Tuesday, November 15th, 1949.

Memorandum:

In a way that seems almost making it real, I am in The Cloisters with a companion who is the only one in this world I know with whom I could enjoy The Cloisters with to their fullest value. Once I liked to go to that place alone because there was no one in all Manhattan with whom I could share it completely. Consequently, in being unable to share its beauty, I absorbed but half its real loveliness, for only by sharing anything with a kindred soul do we respond to its ultimate vibration. And so here you are in one way, and yet there we are together in another, and I need not tell you how enchanted at finding us where we are.

How kind of you to remember me so generously, and how beautifully clear are all the pictures. I shall let Little Robert have a look at his own likeness and then it will go into the Yucca scrapbook along with the other of the same garden. I am astonished at how clearly they have come out, and especially the one with the Arenbourg lilies in the foreground, for that particular shot was made just after sun up, as the shadow of the magnolia across the grass, between the gallery and the sun dial indicates. For the view is to the North, and the magnolia to the East, so that its shadow spreading westward suggest the sun hasn't been above the horizon too long.

As for The Cloisters, and the lady to whom Murrell always refers to as "Miss E", they are turly marvelous, and they are not going in a scrapbook in in a folio with some Washington ones which I keep on my desk where I can turn to them a billion times a day and for those little segments of time, relax in communion with one who somehow never fails to harmonize in every passing thought that flits through my mind and lingers near my heart. It has been a grand day, and "bottled sunshine" will forever be within easy reach as I buzz around my Underwood sometimes during the day and always at its close. Again and agin my thanks.

And how can I begin to thank you for your lovely letter, so brimming over with ever many kind thought and fascinating items of news. And first off let me thank you for having so thoughtfully provided me with the two addresses. At this moment, I am not sure if I shall use them both or not, and perhaps I shall speak of them further along in this letter or at a subsequent sitting. But if I don't

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may ask you to drop a line in my behalf to each of the people mentioned. The point is this: - if the lady is going to do a biography of Alf, her job will be ever so much more complete and satisfying to herself and to her readers if she knows and chats with Arthur Joas (Jonas). I reckon he is in the Manhattan telephone book. If not, she could undoubtedly get in touch with him through Baton, Barton Durstin and Osborne, or whatever that advertising agency is, since he is still known to them. I should rather not advance the name to the lady, since that might result in a resumption of relations with the Jonases, and because of the somewhat peculiar of the circumstances that caused that friendship to fade out, it is better if my name and address isn't brought to the surface at the present time. I shall not write without sending the message through you. If you think of any way a card might be sent the lady, mentioning Arthur as a very dear and intimate friend of Alf, feel quite free to do so. Little side lights on both Louis and Alf would or could be forth-coming from Arthur and would undoubtedly be of the greatest assistance to the biographer, and, I suppose, Arthur would be enchanted to cast additional glow on the memory of one he loved so much.

You didn't mention how you found the pictures. Personally I never did care much for his ultra modern stuff. Frankly, it always seemed to me he was painting them, not to much in any expression of himself but rather in protest against the more conservative style of his papa, - in consequence whereof, he automatically robbed himself of his finest expression.

And of course, as usual, your hit the nail slap on the head, and in your usual timely fashion when you discovered the blanks as concocted by the American Art Council, or whatever the organization is called. I wonder if, without imposing too much on your good nature, if you might telephone somebody about them, asking that one be sent you with a view to forwarding to a friend who would undoubtedly like to register one or more paintings of historic interest. If you wanted to, you could give my name and address, or merely keep that out of it, using the 908 address of your own, if you preferred. Any way you handle it will be fine, and I shall undoubtedly receive the same prior to my January 2nd speech. They, - the blanks, - are not imperative for that initial bow, but they would help considerably, I presume, and if you should prefer, for any one of a dozen reasons, I shall send off an air mail with the request.

But I am nearly at the end of the page, and so much more to talk about. I hadn't heard of the death of Boutet de Monvel and what a pity such a civilized person had to go. But let me turn to the other side of the conversation.... night may come back soon so we may resume our conversation....

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Wednesday, November 16th, 1949.

Memorandum:

I write from "my cloisters" which flank by desk at right and left, and your presence throws vast shafts of sunshine in spite of deep night outside.

The warm weather has returned, affording me pleasant balminess on the Terrace of Arenbourg, and each visit finds me deeper in beggar lice as I slay and ~~in~~ slaughter the weeds, and make preparations for transplanting things if and when the thermometer drops and with the sap down, removal of plants is possible.

Something perfectly hilarious happened yesterday which I must recount forthwith. My pilgrims included three bags from town, I guess, one being from the College, I believe, one the wife of the new R. E. A. manager and somebody else. They had petitioned a tour from J. E., and he had asked me if I could arrange it. I could. And we all started off by 1:30 coffee at Celeste's and Mrs. Holloman and another lady from Alexandria joined us. I sent the Alexandria ladies to the African House while I did the first part of the tour, and from then on it was Hurray, boys. At Yucca the three ladies from town took one glance at Grandpere's portrait and had seen enough, but Mrs. Holloman recommended that they observe the fine portrait of "Father and Son" hanging over the fireplace in my boudoir. The ladies preceded me, and glanced at the portrait as a concession. And then, as I joined them, one of them looked fixedly at me and declared:

"Whatever else may be said about the picture, the artist certainly made an excellent likeness of you."

Supposing her to be playfully minded momentarily, I said

"Thank you, Mam. I'll convey your congratulations to the artist the next time I see him."

The ladies then withdrew without so much as casting an eye at the big old iron chest, the grandfather's clock and so on. I accompanied them as far as the gate. After saying Goodbye, one of them said she had just one question she wanted to ask:

"Does your colored son, painted with you in the portrait, live here on Melrose with you or not."

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Well, you could have knocked me down with a fender.

And so I swallowed hard and said:

"Well, yes and no. You see it is true that Melrose is the mulatto center of the Cane River country, but as a matter of fact, all of them, including the boy you refer to, actually live across the river on the opposite bank."

I could scarcely wait until the Rands arrived today so we could roll on the floor together.

As for the Rands, they picked me up to dine with them at their camp, immediately after which Dr. Rand took their guest, Mrs. Blanchard, out in the speedboat while Madam Rand and I conferred under the cedars, outlining the strategy for the presentation of the Alexandria Project. Apparently everything is in order, and I am glad, for the impending six weeks will be so cluttered up with holidays for most people that I reckon there will be little opportunity to touch on details during the interim, although I propose to prepare Alexandria publicity and copy for Baton Rouge, Shreveport and New Orleans papers as a quick follow-up. I envision the possibility that some very interesting and unexpected items may come to light almost immediately after my speech inaugurating the plan, and already I believe I know where there is an Audubon portrait, long since forgotten, and the rather splendid life size portrait of General Devereux that used to grace Miss Myra's Devereux, and I have no doubt some of these finds may well offer material for magazine articles in other papers in the larger cities as the program spreads from State to State.

Celeste astonished me yesterday by saying that one of her friends, a Jewess, who was present at that Natchitoches gathering I addressed a few weeks back, contacted her the other day to say that ever since that day she had time and again found herself saying the Lord's Prayer over and over again. I hope the Rabbi doesn't hear about that.

As for my friends of color, their reaction to one thing or another continues to unhinge me, so far as predictability goes. Mr. Brew came by to perform his offices today. He mentioned his first born, a daughter, arrived in Alexandria last Friday. He didn't know what they had named her. He didn't drive his fine second hand car the 47 miles to see his new daughter on Sunday, but attended a school frolic instead. He says he will go next Saturday to have a look at his child and bring her and its mother home the same day. Indifference doesn't seem to be the word to explain this seeming leisurely approach - but for the life of me if it be not indifference, which it isn't, I don't know what to term it. And I have no doubt his wife takes this prolonged absence as a matter of course, which I certainly don't when it is nothing more than running through my mail when he skips a day.....

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Thursday, November 17th, 1949.

Memorandum:

And so rounds out a year.

I think it has been a good year, without much ground lost but rather some ground gained, with the prospect of additional advances in the future.

Sometimes it seems as though we are able to do more for some people after they have gone than while they are with us. The Madam's departure appears to me to be a case in point. Perhaps she had accomplished all that was apportioned for her earthly task, made up in such a large measure of giving herself for others, so that when she really moves on to wider spheres, many of those enterprises envisioned before now come more perfectly into focus, the pebble disappearing beneath the surface of the water snedding out its ripples endlessly to the margins of time.

So run some of my thoughts at the close of this beautiful fall day, - all blue and gold above, but save for spots in the sunshine, withal a little chilly because of a brisk breeze out of the North. At Arenbourg the breeze was such that in spite of much vim and vigo expended on swinging away at the weeds, I kept pleasantly cool throughout my setting up exercises, and although I came away looking like something out of a rag bag, what with the coating of stick-tights and the like, I felt as cool as a cucumber.

In yesterday's post, - at long last, - came the Lewis and Clark Expedition by Bakeless, or some such. I read a page or two and liked it, even though the stile is a little heavy. The book begins with an account of Thomas Jefferson naming the 26 year old Mr. Clark as his private secretary when ascending to the Presidency in 1801, and I think we are as one in the unfailing pleasure we experience whenever we run across our old friend of Marly and Monticello.

I hope to read a couple of more pages tonight, and shall undoubtedly do much by way of "book review" before I am done with the volume.

And speaking of expeditions, Dr. Rand referred to the one he made from St. Francisville to Natchez a year or so ago in company with his friend from Southwestern, using the story as an example of how many people often contribute to a greater or smaller degree in making any quest of that nature successful.

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I may have mentioned at the time that we planned the trip in advance, detailing the lost gardens and setting down notes between each desolated loveliness, so that he and Dr. N. could find them readily. We started off with The Cottage which they did not know and there they went first. They met a Miss Bailey or some such person, Editor of Home Gardening or some such sheet, published monthly in New Orleans, and as she is vaguely related to Miss Louise, things went along swimmingly. After examining the remains of the gardens, they looked over Miss Louise's horticultural books and in one volume, printed in 1836, found a colored illustration of a pale pink camelia which has long been lost to the modern world. Miss Louise, although Dr. Rand was calling on her for the first time, let him take the book with him so he could photograph this vanished floral beauty. A week or two later, after returning home, he photographed the item and recorded its delicate coloring, and then returned the book by post to Miss Louise, inserting a photograph, and at the same time mailed one to Miss Bailey. In the next issue of her little magazine, that little lady gave the photograph a full page illustration, and in a note explained that it had once flowered in the Feliciana area, it was thought, but had been lost for more than a generation. Within the next day or two, following the publication of the magazine, several little boxes addressed to the lady, mostly from the St. Francisville area, brought precisely the same camelia she had featured. In each case, the sender lived in some remote situation in the Felicianas, their plantations never visited by horticulturalists, and this particular flower had continued to thrive down through the years, unrecognized by the owners who didn't realize it had been lost, and unseen by the experts who never chanced to run across it. And thus, thanks to the combined efforts of Miss Louise, her friend, the cooperation of the various owners of the plant and of Dr. Rand, one more treasure from the past has been rescued and of course guaranteed perpetuation for ages to come.

I don't feel too noble tonight, what with a batch of correspondence demanding my attention but I reckon I had better gird up my loins and jump in, and so sleep the deeper in realizing my dawdling tactics of late has let it pile up. And the thought strikes me as I write about correspondence that our nightly conversations never seem to fall into that category, for correspondence is something I sometimes shun, but our nightly comparison of notes has never seemed to me to fall into that category and too often during the day I find myself impatiently awaiting the hour when the plantation and the countryside has dimmed into darkness and slumber so we can begin to commune. And how pleasant it is at this moment to be alone save for my companion of The Cloisters.....

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Thursday, November 18th, 1949.

Memorandum:

A marvelous day, cloudless and cool, and in every way the antithesis of a year ago when after endless cloud-bursts and crashing thunder storms, I finally found myself seated at this same desk, to chat with you a little before forgetting it all in sleep.

But in spite of the perfection of the weather, the hag itself has been sufficiently hurly-burly, what with one thing and another, not the least of which is the disturbing news that all the Wenks are descending on us tomorrow for the week end. But there may be some advantage in that, if one strains far enough ahead to foresee the possibility that this visit may eliminate any similar onslaught during the holiday season, which is something to be thankful for.

The Rands are expecting to visit their camp on Sunday. I hope the Wenks have pulled out before they arrive. The harnesses have altered their plans so that their visit to Louisiana will not transpire this December but rather next Spring, and I reckon that may be just as well, especially for their aspirations in the fishing field.

Celeste is expecting a bevy of Mansura or Maxwell kin folks on the morrow, too, so that all in all the week end ought to be fairly brisk. Mrs. Regard asked me if I would kindly give the people a tour; Celeste asked if I would please not. If the Wenks pass this way before hand, there may be nothing left to see, so that will simplify that problem.

I love Miss Kate's note, under the signature of Renegade, confessing that she, Celeste and Adam Regard had all agreed I shouldn't be hiding my light under a bushel. Not so much under a bushel, I should say, as behind a bush. Well, Lord, at least I ain't hiding it under a deck of cards.

But enough of such tomfoolery, and besides, I want to tell you of a perfectly delightful bit of local ingenuity which came to my attention yesterday and withal enchanted me. Peter passed this way, carry a pair of new shoes in his hand, saying his feet were killing him, and asking me if I could lend him a bucket for a few minutes, as he wanted to stretch his foot gear. He was welcome. And naturally I expected he would fill the bucket with water and immerse the shoes, - but that is where I was wrong.

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In his other hand he carried a small paper sack filled with cotton seed. Putting some warm water in the bucket, he poured in the seed, leaving them to soak for half an hour. Then he removed the seed and drained off the loose water, and then stuffed the cotton seed into the shoes ever so tightly, slap down to the o toe. He said he was taking them home to "set" over night, but I asked him to leave them here as I wanted to see the seed start oozing over the tops of the shoes. But I was wrong in my assumption that they might vaguely suggest the top of a milk bottle on anybody's doorstep with a thermometer around zero. For not a seed popped out, but merely spread one against the other, and packing themselves so tightly that Peter had to pry great bunches of them out with a stick. After that, he let them dry a little and then slipped them on, a smile of ease and satisfaction spreading all over his face. It seems the operation was a complete success and the shoes tied, which the laces, so stretched previously by his foot, had not. And so I pass along this bit of rural wizardry, just in case you ever are troubled by shoes that are too tight, assuming, of course, that your local gin can supply you with an abundant amount of cotton seed.

I did a little more reading from the Lewis and Clark thing last night and found many interesting points. Mention was made of the William Bach cottage at Monticello where Benjamin Franklin's son resided while a guest of Mr. Jefferson. I read the Bernard Fay book, The Two Franklins, or some such name, the book being mostly about Benjamin Bache, not William, as inadvertently mentioned above, but I don't recall any reference to the Monticello days. But now I am beginning to wonder if there was a William quite aside from Benjamin, which brought about the confusion in my mind, as indicated in my original statement. Do you by any chance remember seeing any such cottage at Monticello. The building may no longer exist, - I couldn't tell from the way the reference was worded. Personally, I never saw it.

And I didn't know that one of old LaFayette's relatives, perhaps a half brother, - which I didn't know he had, lived on an island in the Ohio where Mr. Lewis visited him on his initial stage of his great trek. It sounded as though the man's name was Dr. Brunot, or some such, and of course anyone living on an island in the Ohio in 1803 automatically brings to mind old Blennerhasset and his Ohio island.

The other says, too, that many people, disgruntled over the collapse of the Whiskey Rebellion in the early 1790's in Pennsylvania migrated Westward and settled in the Natchez country. Naturally I elevated both ears at that. The only name he mentioned in connection with this was Bradford, or some such, that rings no bell in my memory. ---But here I am at the end of the page, and really just starting. But tomorrow is another day, and Sunday night we shall chat again.....

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Sunday, November 20th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Celeste said it:

"I had really forgotten how bad it could be."

Indifferently I countered:

"I didn't catch it, - did you say How bad or How mad it could be, - and which ever word you used, it really doesn't have cover the case."

The Wenks came about 5 on Saturday and left about 2 on Sunday. There was no rampus, no battles, much heavy drinking but no inebriation, but a constant whilwind tearing through the air in every direction from the focal point of the storm.

"Where's my pocketbook", "Who stole my cigarettes", "Go over to Celeste, Mattie, and bring us some more licquor", "Go back over to Celeste's and get us some ice", --mending, constant and convulsing, we were all frazzled out within five minutes from the time they arrived, and probably will not get back to normalcy before the next go-round, - scheduled for Wednesday, repeats itself.

Fortunately the General telephoned this morning, saying the Baton Rouge Henrys would be here for Thanksgiving, - and that of course meant that the Wenks would not linger, if they should return on the day before.

Among other things it was announced that I had to have a new radio, - an expensive one that would pick up the finer points in F. M. Short Wave and Heaven knows what all. I told them I didn't want such a machine, that the one now being repaired suits me and that I don't want strange and remote stations but merely any old bundle that will produce a new broadcast. No, that wouldn't do, I simply must have a 6 or 8 tube set and so on and so on and so on.

Well, thank the Lord for the night and their absence from this Parish

But I was happy, later in the afternoon, to see Dr. Rand, who brought me a swell aquarium for my window, here by my desk, one that I can look slap through and observe our feathered friends dining on the shelf just on the other side of the window pane.

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And other late pilgrims included Dr. Bath of Matchitoches, who used to tend to Miss Leudivine in the old days, and it was pleasant to talk over old times with him, - and curiously he and I had never met before this afternoon.

J. H. and Celeste and Adam Regard got a good laugh out of one of my latest experiences with a pilgrim. I must burden you with it, even though it isn't very funny. I should explain that sometimes pilgrims, skipping the store, will have one of the party go in the front gate and inquire at the big house if a tour is possible. One such came in that manner on Wednesday, and as usual, I inquire if the person is alone or if a party is waiting in the car, and usually there is. On Saturday morning at 8, a servant came to say there was a lady waiting at the big house. I dropped my Underwood and although in a terrible hurry, did think I might accommodate the party before mail time. As usual, I asked the lady, - perhaps in her 60's, from which section she came, and she said from Commerce, Texas. I asked there that night be, - thinking she would say near Dallas, San Antonio or some general region, but she said quite precisely: "Commerce is in Hunt Country", - which was certainly illuminating.

I asked her if there were friends who wished to see the place with her, but she explained she was traveling alone. And so I explained my "slow hurry", and off we went. But when we reached the first building, and I had opened the door for her to enter, she stepped sedately back and with some firmness declared:

"No, you go in first, and I shall remain here by the door. You see, you have frightened me just a little, asking me about being alone. People really aren't to be trusted at all times, and I prefer to stand out here."

I tried to allay her fears, explaining that at 8 o'clock in the morning and especially when rushing to get ahead of the in-coming postman, I was usually considered comparatively harmless, but I need not add the pilgrimage somehow terminated awfully soon thereafter.

So much for the bag from Commerce, "which is in Hunt Country", but J. H. will be kidding me about it for days.

Of course I got no correspondence done today, but will try to do a little tonight before reading a page or two and folding up. It seems there was a negro, - York, - a servant of Lewis who made the entire trip with the expedition. The Indians had never seen a black man before and were fascinated, especially when York explained to them that in reality he was a wild animal which Mr. Lewis had tamed and brought with him. Don't you love that.....

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Monday, November 21st, 1949.

Memorandum:

It's cold. I haven't looked at a thermometer and my new 8 or 10 tube radio from the Wenks hasn't arrived as yet, so I don't know what the Weather Bureau has to say about it, but I need neither to know it is cold. Too warm for comfort almost, a cold wind came out of the North at sun up, and has remained blowing all day. A couple of days of this, and transplanting time will be upon us.

At supper tonight, the reason for the "Wenk-end" came a little more clearly into the picture. J. H. told me that the Wenks wanted to borrow twenty-five thousand dollars. I assume this is to effect the purchase of the new nursing home. He said he told them he would have to take the matter up with Joe and Steve, which was tantamount to saying they would never get it from Melrose. With all the denunciation that has gone forward and backward, I never could understand how either faction would go to the other for favors. Perhaps their denunciations really aren't intended to be so vitriolic as they sound. Personally I am quite incapable of comprehending the system which impells one to throw brickbats one moment and ask for twenty five thousand dollars the next. For all I know, it may be a good old inter-family custom enjoying wide spread practice, but I just wouldn't know about such business.

But speaking of high finance, I must confess I prefer the child like simplicity of my negro friends. Peter is 23. He parked his tractor behind the bamboo hedge this noon and dashed across the White Garden to consult me on a mathematical problem he had been wrestling with all morning. Mr. Brew had just finished the mail and departed. Said Peter:

"If you takes 8 off from 18, then how much has you got."

I put a pensive frown on my brow and thought hard, for I never like to give the impression that one's person's problem that could worry away an entire morning, could be solved too easily. And then, after I had announced my decision, Peter was entrance. He allowed as how he had just "run up" on a couple of dollars, for after mature reflection between dawn and high noon, he had come to the conclusion that when "you takes off 18", you have but 8 left, and thus the two dollar "find" which he had effected.

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Now let's see, - whatever is cooking on the home front. Oh! yes. Mrs. Rand telephoned this morning, saying they had forgotten to invite me for Thanksgiving dinner at the camp. I declined, what with the General fixing to be here, but accepted supper instead. Ora passed this way in the afternoon, having Mrs. Williams with her, the both of them returning to Natchitoches after spending the day at Hot Wells. Ora came by to say she and R. B. would like to have me come to Thursday dinner with them. Naturally I declined. And about 5 Don telephoned to ask me about dining in town with them, which seems to just about round up the turkey talk for one day.

The Worsleys asked what night other than Thursday I would care to have them pick me up to dine in town with them and spend the evening or night with them, as I might choose. I told them frankly I would rather have them pass this way, not only, as I did not tell them, because I prefer to keep my own home fires burning but also because it seems ridiculous to me to have them chasing up and down the road to deliver me in this remote situation. They are perfectly right in being puzzled at my preference to remaining at home. Isn't it odd that so few people seem to find contentment in "staying put". It must be admitted, - and I should be the first to say so, that half the things I undertake aren't worth two cents, but if I get pleasure in such employment instead of flying up and down the road, it does seem odd others should be puzzled about it. But on second thought, I, myself, am just as much in the fog as to why they should find solace only when traveling a mile a minute, and going up where so I reckon I must be charitable when they fail to get my view point.

Don spoke of having skippeed down to Baton Rouge the other night with the good wife to attend the Horse Show. I suppose so far as distance is concerned, that would be about like a Manhattan physician, after taking in his shingle at the close of a busy day, suddenly jumping astride the family Ford and driving to Albany or Boston to observe a lot of fine horse flesh. I find the whole thing a little staggering, but they must find me stupid for being content to rig up my reading machine and journey at the close of day over the Rockies with Lewis and Clark on a revolving disk. I guess it all boils down to that old saw: "Anything you do is alright, but don't do it."

The Dorman epistle by long hand, penned as I understand it from Fort Worth on her way back from Oklahoma, was an unexpected plaisir. In writing it, little did she suspect her reference to Eli would set me to thinking about the fact that I don't recall Dora having mentioned Eli in months, if not years. I must make inquiry from that quarter regarding the lady for she is a nice person. Perhaps I had better get busy, shortly after Jan. 2nd, and put a flea in Eli's sister's ear, Frances Brandon of Natchez, on the D.A.R. thing.....

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Tuesday, November 22nd, 1949.

Memorandum

How nice to have your letter of Wednesday, the 16th, in today's post. But I am sorry to hear you had to be under the weather earlier in the week with a cold. I guess it must be the season for colds, since everyone I know seems to be barking mightily. Thus far, - and I pause to knock wood, - I appear to have been lucky. But what with cold winds continuing out of the North, and so many of my friends scuffling around that draftiest of all places on earth, the cotton gin, I reckon many of them will continue to cough and snuffle for many a week to come.

I am hoping last week end saw your South American numbers on the high seas again, thus affording you a moment or two of being comparatively alone for the week end, for I have no doubt the impending Thanksgiving holiday may see an on-slaught of school boys on your door step, or some such. Only you can sigh and smile with me when people like Miss Kate complain that I don't get about enough. When I think how many people within the environs of Melrose who get about so much, I contrast how far they get with how far I don't, and so come to the conclusion that the Greek philosopher was perfectly right in admonishing men to exercise moderation in everything.

You ask about Life, and I would report it comes to hand each week on Saturdays, and I can't think why I haven't referred to lots of the larger pictures during the past few months which have delighted me, the van Goghs, the Hapsburgh Collection, the photo raphs in color of Capri and so on, but the truth is that I never get an opportunity to run through the succeeding issues with anyone, and so I continue to revel in the larger renditions and probably skip many of the minor points that under ordinary circumstances would intrigue me as much as the larger ones.

And may I thank you for your splendid expression of approval and enthusiasm in regard to the Alexandria Project. It now appears to me to be so nearly accomplished that I have filed it away in my mind until January 2nd, and have begun formulating plans for subsequent publicity. With stuff for the Magazine Section being required by the Picayune a month in advance of the Sunday paper of which it is a part, I am rigging up the framework for an article which I hope I can dictate to Mrs. Holloman between now and the first week in December. It will seem odd writing about a discovery

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of certain Art treasures, under a December date, whereas the article itself will indicate their actual uncovering to be the results of labor following the inauguration of the Project the following January.

If money isn't forth-coming from the Alexandria D. A. R. for having some photographic work done, I shall invite Mrs. Holloman to invest a little in having a Town Talk photographer take a picture of the portrait by Audubon in Alexandria, which we shall discover almost immediately after the January 2nd meeting. And I think I should like to use the portrait of Mr. Emanuel Frudhomme of the Joyous Coast, holding a bowl of cotton in his hand, and possibly the father and son photograph or that of Grandpere, which has already been recorded. It is possible the 27th of November issue, carrying the Melrose article may carry the photograph of Grandpere, but I am hoping not, both because I should like to use it for this article on the "Discovery of Early American Masterpieces", and also because the only good picture the Town Talk photographer got of that painting somehow contrived to get me into the same shot, and if I must be identified with one article or the other, I should prefer the Art one.

The continued silence from Mr. Lansford puzzles me, feeling as I do, that he must be tremendously interested in the original proposal I made in my letter to him. Perhaps he found the suggestion of a survey or inventory so crack-potted that he would do well not to communicate further with a maniac. Possibly he is ill or busy or something. Then, too, it is quite possible he has cast about the Crescent City for someone who might know me, and if he asked little Miss Alberta, she would probably warn him against me, for she usually is pleased to hail me as a Communist, while if Barnett and I were approached, there is simply no telling. But Lansford or no Lansford, straight ahead will I go, and after an imposing stack of cards from the Parishes of Rapides and Natchitoches have been assembled, and publicity begins to spread, Mr. Lansford may come up for air. I am jockeying with the idea, but merely toying with it, - or either running over to Austin, Fort Worth or Dallas, to start the ball rolling in the Lone Star State, but there will have to be preliminary spadework done in that direction first, and traveling expenses out of the State or National Funds would of necessity be forth coming in advance.

In the mean time, I must lay out the broader aspects of the original Project with a view to getting it into print in the Town Talk so it may be clipped out and sent along with letters to the various State Regents, I believe they call them, and thence on to the National Committee or Governing Board in Washington, together with letters by D. A. R. Presidents to their local newspapers, asking for cooperation from individual Editors, for while the canvas made by each member of any individual chapter will skim off the cream, still, if all the newspapers carry articles about the Project when each is launched in its respective community, there ought to be many newspaper readers, who if asked to, would volunteer by telephone or letter the presence

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Wednesday, November 23rd, 1949.

Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other, according to some old quack, for never in my life did I ever see one thing equal to the other, and never do I hope to find anything quite equaling my meandering secretaries, both of whom turned up yesterday, neither of whom showed up today.

Fortunately the mail doesn't seem to be of primary interest, and so both of them will have employment tomorrow, one reading today's dispatches, the other tomorrow's. There seems to be something from little Miss Denholme and something else from Dora, and a line from Watcher and a couple of items from South Louisiana, all of which, except Robina's, might wait for a week, I expect, and little news would be held up.

And did I mention or hadn't it yet happened when I wrote yesterday that the same day I got my radio back from the repair shop, the same day the tubes in my reading machine went haywire, - just another instance of "things equal to the same thing....." I guess.

And so Messrs Lewis and Clark will have to linger on the Missouri for a few days at least, where I shall pick them up on their return journey from their trek to the far side of the Rockies and back.

And while I think of it, - if I haven't mentioned it before, - Dr. Rand last Sunday brought me a copy of the November issue of Esquire. On the back of the double page carrying the pin-up girl is a striking illustration in color of James Bouy in some kind of a curious knife with duels. It was Mr. Bouy, you may recall, whom old Benjamin Chase of Mantua took out to the plantation with him to recuperate, following the Sambar duel. There is an old print of Bouy, along side that of General Robert E. Lee, gracing the North wall of the dining room of the big house. The print is said to be rare. I believe there is a printed page facing the illustration in Esquire, telling something about the gentleman, but I haven't explored that. I'll bet dollars to doughnuts there is mention of the famous knife he designed and which still bears his name, and I'll bet a second round that nothing is mentioned about old Mr. Fitzgerald, the Hatcher blacksmith who contrived the knife to design, and by his secret of knowing how to temper steel after the manner of the old Damascus blades, was probably the

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greatest artist and artisan old Natchez ever produced. It is curious he is always left out.

Well, good news travels fast, it appears, and rumor has it that I am about to receive a visitation from a Natchitoches D. A. R.'s who are going to pray me to address their society shortly. I received the rumor from Ora who passed this way with her 7 year old son for a moment this afternoon.

I am indebted to Ora for acquainting me with the rumor, for between now and the time they blow in, I shall have had an opportunity to tie a string on my acceptance of their invitation, - probably in the form that they undertake an inventory of the entire Parish in some record time. I don't know how heavy the membership is in this Parish, but as it is the largest Parish, geographically it may require a little more traveling than some of the smaller civic units. Then, too, I shall demur any date save one early or near the middle of January, rather than in February, as Ora thought might likely be the date for which they are making preparations. By arranging a special conclave almost immediately after my jaunt to Alexandria, - going on the 2nd, and returning on the 3rd, - I shall be able to warble the same song locally as I propose to sing further down Red River, thus killing a couple of Mr. Audubon's finest with a single shot, almost.

I made pretty good progress during the past day on writing the article for the Picayune, detailing the marvelous discoveries made by the D. A. R., immediately following the adoption of the Alexandria Project. If the Editor of the Magazine Section doesn't go crazy reading that hurly-burly of time when he reads it early in December for January release of an event that won't take place until two weeks hence, then he can stand anything.

There are one or two rough places in the mechanics of my plan that should be smoothed off. When the cards are printed for the Alexandria Project, I should like to have them of such standard measurements that all subsequent cards, brought into existence subsequently for the other far-flung chapters may be uniform. I can't wait to find out if that heavy moving mass of human baggage, known as the National Committee, will advance any money for expense, for if it would, then billions of cards could be struck off at a moderate price for the entire State at least, and supplied to the 75 or 100 chapters in Louisiana alone. But we shall see what we make of the material we do make use of, and eventually we can transcribe the data, when the Parish files expand, if they do, into a State file, and the latter into a national one. I must find out eventually if the National Committee will pay for the publication of the entire survey, which ought to make a mighty fat volume, or a flock of 48 individual volumes, one per state, perhaps, but those are but minor details, and I beg your pardon with all my heart for burdening you about all this business which certainly can't be of too vast interest, even though it does absorb me momentarily.

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Thursday, November 24th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Thanksgiving Day, and I end up completely stuffed and as contented as old Grandpa appeared, after he had had a fine supper on turkey bones.

Summer seems to be in full flower and anybody dreaming of a white Thanksgiving, - if anybody ever did, in Louisiana, was certainly disappointed.

It is always good to see the General and dinner at the big house saw all the Louisiana Henrys present except Dan who had gone to New Orleans or some place last night for a football game today. I scurried over to the Rand camp about 1:30, in time to decline all proffered food but to join in an elegant cup of coffee. I brought Dr. and Mrs. Rand and General Jack, their son-in-law, of Shreveport, back with me to say howdy to the General, but the latter was in the midst of a siesta, and so they departed after sitting with me for a while.

From the enclosure, you will note that little Miss A. is getting about the State. I had no inkling she was in the big road or I should not have written her yesterday, telling her of the advent of the Sturgeons at 823 Royal this week end but perhaps they will catch her before she heads out Northward, assuming she goes direct to Shreveport, which I doubt.

In this morning's post arrived a new Motorola, which seems to be a radio much like the one I had before, and which had just been repaired. I rigged up the latter immediately and shipped it off by the same mail, thus doing what I could to furnish any excuse, so far as I was concerned, for an early visitation to pick it up.

J. H. says that Joe Henry is coming over to spend a couple weeks, as of December 2nd, and that will block any move Sister might make in this direction. Joe has never remained here two weeks at a stretch, and I doubt if he will this time, but it will be good information to broadcast to slow up his sister. I like Joe and it will be fun having him here.

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I suppose it was a holiday in town, but plantation operations went along as usual, for I doubt if Louisiana negroes have ever been inculcated with doings on Plymouth Rock and somehow the day never seems to register with them. But since June 19th seems to be gradually dying out in popularity as a holiday, perhaps the final Thursday in November will eventually take its place.

Ora told me yesterday that Senator Long in a Shreveport speech before negro educators assured the assembly that he had discussed federal allotment funds with President Truman and that they were agreed a third of all such ear marked moneys should be devoted to negro education. As Ora remarked, what with the negro beginning to vote in Louisiana, there seems to be some political acumen in Russel as well as in his late and unlamented father, Huey. The Longs have always been a puzzle to me in regard to their stand on color. Coming from Winfield, which is amply hill billy both in the town and in Win Parish, it seems surprising they haven't been more anti-racial than their record indicates. It is true that Huey was wont to call any political opponent "Kinky", to suggest negro blood, if the adversary was at all formidable, but they never did go in for active negro baiting after the manner of the Tlamadges of Georgia. In promising funds to negro educators, you may be sure the Longs are not doing so because of their love for the colored race, but the fact that they don't go screaming about the State against the negro seems remarkable and a little out of character.

David was at the Post Office this morning when the General came to make his usual call on me, and I am sorry I missed him. Perhaps we shall have better luck on the morrow. We did sit in the library for a while after dinner and had a good chat, however, and I concurred with him in his distinct regret that David Lillienthal has resigned from the Atomic Energy Commission for we both feel, and I with but scant information that he has been a splendid public servant.

I diverted Peter from some of his plantation labors for a few hours today to do some diskings on the terrace at Arenbourg, and he will return to the same employment once or twice more this week, assuming the fair weather holds. It is good to make life miserable for the roots of the Johnson Grass at this season and to stir about the young trees, before bedding them all down with cotton hulls, and it is pleasant to know the work is progressing nicely. Forgive this gull letter. I'd like to put it off on the turkey, but the fault is really mine.....

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Friday, November 25th, 1949.

Memorandum:

And so here is the latest story going the rounds, delighting all the colored folks who hear it, and all do hear it and each likes to tell it endlessly:

There were two white men, or perhaps I should say there was two white mens and each of 'em had a nigger what was workin' for him, both of 'em, and the one white man was always tellin' the other white man that his nigger was the bestest in any old thing he tried to do. And so one day the other man, he got tired of it and he say to the other white man that what with both of 'em havin' each of 'em their nigger with him, they jus' see which nigger was the better.

And so they was where there was some stones and the one white man say his nigger could throw a stone or rather could chunk a stone the far-est, and he told his nigger to do it, and he did and the stone went slap across a big old river, clean to the far side.

And so the other white man he say to his nigger to see if he could throw jus' as far. And the nigger, what hadn't thrown yet, he picked his-self up a rock and he started a-windin up his arm. And then, both men a-watchin' him, the nigger what was wind'n up, he holds his arm still for a minute, jus' a lookin' slap up toward Heaven, and he turns to his boss and he say:

"Boss, before I lets go of this here rock, why don't you tell that Old Man up yonder to step aside the door."

Whereupon everyone goes into gales of laughter, and invariably the story teller turns to the listener and says:

"You understand the Old Man what the nigger is making out he sees is Christ."

Over and over again the tale is spun, and never does anyone tire of telling it and nobody tires of listening. And as for myself, I find that I, too, can hear it endlessly, what with the marvelous contagiousness spirit of hilarity the story-teller puts into the unvarying but lush fashion in which he recounts it.

For most of my negro friends, Christ and God

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and one and the same, and it is only when some would be pedantic
deacon unrolls the tale that even the slight variation
of the one, inter-changed for the other, introduces the
slightest variation.

So much for local tomfoolery, and I don't know much
else. The marvelous weather continues with the top soil
almost too hard to do a satisfactory job in disking at
Arenbourg.

The General came over to visit with me this morning,
while his wife passed this way an hour or so after he had
gone. They left for Baton Rouge right after dinner and
Pat went with them. They will return on the Friday night
before Christmas. In the meantime, Joe will have come and
I am hoping I may have been successful in getting Yucca
jacked up again. And the brick pavement on the North
gallery laid. I should like to get that attended to
before I begin getting into the big road as of January
2nd.

Mrs. Peyton Cunningham telephoned me this morning.
You may recall it was her daughter whose likeness appears
in the Aswelll Patchitoches article, the gal on the circular
iron stair. The lady wanted to invite me to take dinner
with them at their home in town one night next week, - I guess
December 5th, when the town's famous pre-Christmas
pyrothetics are touched off and the elaborate electrical
pieces are turned on. The Cunninghams have a lovely home and
I like the family ever so much, but naturally I declined
their invitation. After all I have fireworks of my own
when the morning stars begin to fade out into the dawn, and
what with planting already behind time, I should rather
devote myself to dining out at this particular season.
That sounds like a pretty lame excuse, but it was the only
one I could think of, except that I just prefer to spend
my evenings quietly at home in the same routine to which I
am accustomed. And besides, if I turn down the Worsleys for
dinner, I can't very well accept Cunningham, Williams and
Heaven know what not. How well do I remember Robina remarking
on our first jaunt to Melrose from Shreveport:

"If you will just get it established that you
want to do or not do anything this way or that, - once
you have established that fact, and no matter how curious
it may seem to everybody else, that wish will be respected
at Melrose." And how right she was.

There were some lovely New York people here today, -
the Gibsons. I'll bet I'll see to it that the front gate
is locked on Sunday, especially if the weather is fine, what
with the Melrose reminder in the Picayune for road runners.....

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Sunday, November 27th, 1949.

Memorandum: At least the picture of the big house in today's Picayune is
pretty. That I will admit, but from thence forward, it's a case
of catch as catch can.

To my astonishment, the first third of my article, had been
lifted, immediately following the opening paragraph, and in
its place had been substituted a section of an article I had
dictated on Cane River, not Melrose, several weeks earlier, - the
thing for The-Saturday Evening Post. And even that had been
altered considerably. For instance never in a billion years would
anyone who ever knew the set up have referred to Mr. and Mrs. J. H.
Henry, Senior, as "the young lovers", or however the thing is.

But the last two thirds of the piece is pretty much mine, with
many omissions, as the flod style will be easily recognizable to
any reader of a Melrose Memorandum.

There were a flock of names I included in my article that
were also eliminated, - Dr. Miller, Boris Ullman, James Pipes, etc.
I need scarcely tell you I gave Mr. Lane equal prominence with Mr.
Saxon. And I didn't write the captions. Even I can see that they
have called the Bindery the Loom House, which doesn't matter in the
least.

The burden of my article on the Madam ran thus: - here was
a woman with numerous children and an extensive household who not
only managed to take that in her stride but to accomplish a
heap of other things, too, including some of the things cited at
the final section of the article. Of course the Editors eliminated
the children completely, which I would notice but perhaps the casual
reader wouldn't. And somewhere in my article I had stressed
the point that what Rockefeller had done on a grand scale with
millions of dollars for the preservation of an old colonial
capitol, so the Madam, on an ever so much more modest scale, had
done for an old colonial plantation home. Of course only you know
that what I was trying to say was this: - to those who are her
heirs; - Conserve what she has wrought and to her contemporary
and present generation owners of other plantations: - Go you, and
do likewise.

All of that is missing, of course, but perhaps it doesn't matter.
The main thing is that Louisiana's leading newspaper has
printed for its files a piece about one of Louisiana's greatest
plantation personality, and readers in generations to come will
perhaps find enough in this current piece to stimulate their interest
in the lady and what she stood for. And if this be so, then the
article was not precisely in vain, no matter how out of whack it is.

3939

Celeste was naturally a little depressed that a likeness of herself in such an informal pose should have appeared in such striking contrast.

As for me, my complaints aren't worth mentioning. I am sorry they cut off a section of my desk, showing an item or two which you might have recognized, but still I have no doubt your bright eyes may readily recognize certain ribbons and cones suspended along the standard of the reading lamp, and it is quite possible that on the corner of the desk in the immediate foreground, you may recognize a leather desk box, holding my stationary.

There is one thing about the article as a whole that would have tickled the Madam inordinately, and she and I would have been the first to roll on the floor about it, to wit, the fact that with all this talk about the Henry plantation home, the only three personalities appearing in the illustrations are not Henrys, but Garret, Regard and M.... as I often have I probably related in the past that nothing ever gay the Madam so much glee as to be able to address a whole table full of Henrys at holiday time, pointing out to them: "Just remember one thing, that you all are Henrys, but me, I ain't no kin to them itshil. All mention of pilgrims who tried to storm the front gate today. I might shudder if I stopped to anticipate how many will descend on me tomorrow, next Sunday, next Christmas, but I can wring my hands over that at subsequent sittings."

I dined with J. H. Celeste and Madam Regard today. Full summer appears to be on us, with doors and windows standing wide open and half the garden in full flower or bursting buds, all of which any old day will get nipped good by a sudden assault by old Jack Frost. And what with the season being premature, so is the social life along the river, too. For without waiting for Saturday night to roll round, half the plantation population went on a Friday night frolic at the local honkey tonk, hard by the Arenbourg, and practically none of them turned up for work on Saturday morning after an all night go at life Duriday. I believe there must have been much chinking of pop bottles and threatened fireworks and general scuffling, for on Saturday somebody among the mulatto outfit had several negroes arrested, and Peter, among others, it is said, is week ending in the Matchitoches jail. Strangely enough none of the Melrose negroes who have been stealing Melrose pecanes and selling them to Mr. Hyman, could be listed among this week's quota of jail birds, and I have a picture of Peter pondering in jail as to why he, who hasn't stolen anything, must be behind bars while all the regues who did not disturb the peace but did their stuff by stealth, are at liberty to fly up and down the road. And personally, I should hate to have to try to explain it to him.

3940

Memorandum:

Monday, November 28th, 1949.

First off, to the enclosures.

The point of the snapshots was to give some indication of the progress being made by the Arenbourg mimosas pears and nandiana hedge, but I am afraid none of them was a success. The weeds in the foreground of each seem prominent enough, and Little King who is present to give some concept of height, - he is about 6 feet, seems to have fared second best, while the objects which were the reason for these "strikes" seem to have escaped the camera or just about faded out of the picture where actually recorded. Perhaps my next try will be luckier.

As for the other clipping, it isn't too remarkable either as a picture of Rosalyn, but I send it along regardless, thinking you might get a vague notion of her type, and that the printed notice might be of interest. It is a clipping Celeste handed me this morning, and I know not what paper it is from, and I doubt if the clipping includes the name of the publication.

The gin was silent today, which seemed odd, but the season has about played out. What with the thermometer at an all time high in this section for this time of year, much of the plantation was busy hawling wood for the impending winter. A few years back the wood used to be hauled by wagon and mules from the woods on Little River. Usually two men would combine their forces in making two, sometimes three trips, in a day, one load to one man's house, the next load to the other man's, and so on. But now a flock of men go together on a tractor, equipped with a big old trailer, and what with many hands making work light plus a tractor that sails along much more spryly than mules, fully as much if not more can be accomplished in this fashion as contrasted with the former method.

Peter came to see me this noon. He seemed to be just as vague about his immediate future as I am ignorant about things in the local Court and Jail. He is just down for the day. He thinks the other three boys, arrested with him for disturbing the peace, will be able to get the \$125.00 required for the peace bond, and so will not have to return to jail, as he will have to do tonight or

0123

3941

tomorrow. This letting people take time out to
pay a little visit home for a day or two has a gay touch,
don't you think. It reminds me of Roane's brother
who was lodged in jail for several months at a stretch,
but used to stroll up town for breakfast, dinner and
supper, being allowed two or three hours for each
meal.

Peter says he thinks he will have to stay in jail
either for three weeks or twenty four months. I should
think the latter figure a little extended, but one never
knows. It is quite possible J. H. may get him turned out
tomorrow, or he might not. But even if he does have
to remain incarcerated for 24 months, he says he will
be permitted to take a week out to spend Christmas
at Melrose. It is all so confusing. He says the food
is badly cooked but the jail is warm a cosy at night. He
doesn't like the custom obtaining in the jail for
breakfast, coffee being handed one in a cup, and hunks
of bread thrown in on the floor for one to select as
one pleases. Some day I think I shall inspect the jail
at breakfast time. Perhaps, after the D. A. R. girls
have taken an inventory of the nation, they might be
persuaded to pass out nice hot toast to negro prisoners
seeing the various Louisiana bastilles, or would that be
expecting too much.

And speaking of jails and such things, we had a
most uninteresting murder on Melrose this morning along
about 9 o'clock. It was on Little River where Mrs.
Joseph Wilson (full negress) went to the home of a
Mrs. Harris (also full negress) to protest against
what is said to have been the Harris usurpation of Joe
Wilson's affections. Madam Harris bid Madam Wilson,
armed with a club, not to enter her house. The warning
went unheeded and so Mrs. Wilson was felled in her tracks by
the discharge of the Harris shot gun, which tore through
Madam Wilson's hip, death resulting apparently from
loss of blood. There will be a little shadow boxing
in court eventually and Mrs. Harris, pleading self
defense, will be turned loose and that will be that.

This is one of the few days I can ever remember when
there was no mail. I reckon Thanksgiving turkey got
nearby folks so over-stuffed they were in no mood for pen-
pushing. Or perhaps the P. and P. with a Thanksgiving
hang-over, just couldn't make the mail pouches today. Net
result: both my secretaries show up today.....

0123

3942

Tuesday, November 29th, 1949.

Memorandum: May I tell you that the Africa of Albert Sweitzer
came to hand in this morning's post and that I am per-
fectly delighted with the business as a whole and the
illustrations in particular, and the one of the African
House most especially.

What a lovely book and how lovely of you to send it along
to me for my delectation. What I am hoping to do is to substitute some of its pages
for ordinary correspondence and thus be able to entice some
if any of my illusive secretaries into reading it to me
in dribblets until Miss Kate or some such person passes this
way and I have an opportunity to take a real go at it.

Log happened to be here when I returned from the Post
Office and I showed him the elegant end papers which entranced
him, since he had seen Africa from "the Pillars of Hercules",
but had never before apparently envisioned when the whole
continent might look like on a map. He recalled that when
the stopped "under the Rock" on the troop ship loaded
with negro soldiers on their way to war, one of the boys
took one good look off to the right of the ship where an
officer told them the lad in view was Africa. - and the
youth exclaimed:

"That there place is where some of my grandpas and grandmas
come up from, and wouldn't they all be taken a-back if
they'd know me rigged up like this and a-comin' back home."

I hope you don't mind if I retain the volume until during
or after the holiday season before returning it to your
true hand, for the preliminary exploration of the volume
convinces me that I want to read every caption and every
line of the text before passing it back. It is so nice
of you to have shared this item with me, and its arrival
and one glance at the African House which you so thoughtfully
marked has impelled me to get busy with Smithsonian
to discover, if we can, precisely which tribe seems represented
in the local building of the same lines, and thus narrow
down the origins of that remarkable mother who, after
years of absence from Africa, so distinctly remembered
the architecture of her Congo birthplace, and more remarkable,-

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could impart the structural details to her mulatto child when he had reached maturity and was moved to create domicile and outbuildings for his own use that would conform to that of his African forefathers, - and delight the heart of his remarkable mother. The old tales and legends of the hanging gardens of Babylon having been built to recall the mountain home of the Babylonian Queen seems to pale in comparison with the Cane River buildings which the intelligence of the mother, after a generation in exile, could retain and transmit to her offspring who, in turn, could re-construct them for the delight of his mother and himself.

How wonderful the African House in Louisiana seems to expand as a phenomenon, as one considers it, not so much for itself as for the monument it is to the intellect of a truly remarkable African lady, - one whose identity will never be known except through the imagination evoked of her by this memorial to her vanished marvelousness.

Thus does the arrival of your package set off a whole train of thought and speculation. Oddly enough, and although lamentable in one way, and yet rather to my satisfaction in another, there is but one single person in this whole world to whom I could chat about these aspects of these two African Houses, - the Congo one and the Louisiana one, - only one person in all the world who would understand or care a fig about the whole business. How good is God, -- how good is Lydia.

From radio reports from your neighborhood, there is a suggestion of November in the Manhattan air. I take it. But down this way, everything seems to be as out of joint, so far as the calendar is concerned, as could be imagined. For the past couple of days, - and December but day after tomorrow, the thermometer has been staggering around in the 80's and 90's, and the whole business so convincingly contrived that half the shrubs and plants in the gardens are bursting into bloom, just as though they had good sense and the month of June were in the offing.

The T and P continues to hold out on second thoughts after Thanksgiving, and a letter posted in Natchitoches last Friday for my attention hasn't come through yet. But packages and magazines came to hand in abundance today, - including the National Geographic, a batch of things from the Harpers, which I assume may be the Arizona publications mentioned in a recent letter and so on. But I haven't even felt impelled to remove their wrapping, so delighted have I been in discovering the Sweetzer opus.

It has certainly been a grand day for me, and again may I say thank you.....

3944

Wednesday, November 30th, 1949.

Memorandum: The enclosure, as read to me, sounds so typical that it doesn't sound especially new, although all those silver mines that lived with Lyle did strike a note that was a little beyond anything by way of sentence structure that I recall from this particular quarter.

There was a very kind letter from W. D. Postell, too, but he expressed himself a little too extravagantly on one or two points, which may as well be skipped, although curiously enough he made one observation that was identical with a verbal one expressed yesterday by one of the Madam's old friends who telephoned from Natchitoches about the article. It was a striking coincidence that both the letter from New Orleans and the telephone call from town both carried identical lines: -

"The title of the Sunday article was alright so far as it went but would be correct only when completed by the phrase, - 'so long as Francois lives there'."

I find it odd that in each instance, assuming that neither individual knows much if anything about the "hell within whells" as operates hereabouts, should have struck the nail about on the head, so far as the maintenance of the place is concerned.

It now seems assured that I shall get Lewis and Clark home before Christmas. I think I mentioned recently that my reading machine played out at just the time the Expedition was heading back toward civilization on their cruise down the Missouri. I didn't want to worry the local agency in town with the thing before the Thanksgiving holidays, but Madam Combs chanced to pass this way yesterday, I guess it was, and Celeste told her my machine was on the shelf. She accordingly had the thing fixed and now it is back again, and before folding up my beard tonight, I shall set the Messrs Lewis and Clark adrift again in the right direction. It seems that when Mrs. Combs assumed her new position, she accepted it with the resignation that two or three colored clients on Little River, Madam Regard and I should remain on her file, Madam Regard as an old age pensioner, - the Little River people as mothers of fatherless children and Yucca on the Reading Machine, which certainly was kind of her.

3945

The weather remains its same remarkable self and tonight the sun dial suggests an enormous great lily, what with its dark green background and the lush moonlight all over the place.

Just after dark, Mr. Brew, Beau Mack and Peter arrived in force. Mr. Brew to run through the Shreveport item, - which, since I knew would be of no consequence, I permitted him to attack while Beau was cutting my perruque and Peter was just being happy, apparently, that he was on Melrose and with his friends and not behind bars in the same place that still houses "A Man Named Mildred". What with the reading and hair cutting going on at the same time while I was surveying the White Garden from my vantage point, the whole business was a combination the like of which I don't precisely recall as ever having been identical. Celeste is in Shreveport today, and so I spilled a demi-tasse with Madam Regard who passed along a message to me in Celeste's behalf. It seems that Mrs. Alphonse Prudhomme who lived where Uncle Phanor did in Leston's time, had asked me to telephone her, with a view to bidding me to address the Natchitoches D. A. R. before I make my bow to the Rapides Parish group. If Madam Prudhomme doesn't mind, she may, so far as I am concerned, sit on a tack.

And speaking of the old days, I wonder if I mentioned yesterday or the day before of the surprise visit of an old friend. I hope I didn't, for you will love this. Sometime during the afternoon, or perhaps Monday, I had occasion to visit the African House and while there I ran upstairs to have a quiet look at the Hunter primitives. It didn't seem to me I had been there but a couple of minutes when I thought I heard someone on the floor below. I employed my usual line: "Is that you, Sam", - expecting anybody but the voice of any of the several Sams I know, to respond. But not a whisper penetrated the rafters, although I thought I did detect a bored sigh. And so, after fiddling about for a minute or two more, I galloped gayly downstairs into a room which by some miracle had somehow seemed to contract astonishingly during my five minutes on the floor above. For there, slap in the middle of the room, and apparently inspecting the weaving on the Madam's loom, stood my old, old friend, whose name I can never remember, - Jim or George, but one second thought I guess it was George. Somebody must have left a series of gates open and George had wandered into the gardens and thence into the African House, of all places. Not a chair had been touched not a copper pot up-set, for George, forever a kindly soul, is apparently is likewise museum minded. A bull in a china shop I have heard about, but a Brahmin bull in a museum is something else again. Sedately, George turned his head and wiggled an ear at me. I went over and scratched it and thumped his hump and wiggled h.

I tried pushing him eventually, but getting no where, laying hold of his other ear, ushered him out without protest on his part and we continued out resumption of friendship on the greenward outside....

3946

Thursday, December 1st, 1949.

Memorandum:

The marvelous weather continues, with just a trace of chiffon floating thinly against the blue, - smoke from a dozen forest fires blazing away somewhere to the West of us. After all the dampness of the past season, it seems odd that fires should follow so fast on the heels of the cloudbursts.

It is really too dry to transplant, but I was entranced to be able to get quite a lot of things done in the Odds and Ends Department. The air is so invigorating early in the day that I ran slap through until Knipmeyer time without realizing the day had really got going good.

The Knipmeyers invited me to town for dinner on Saturday night to observe the fireworks, inaugurating the special lighting displays to be turned on in town on the 3rd. Naturally I declined.

Dr. K. said he had just signed Mrs. Joe Wilson's death certificate, - exsanguination being set down as the cause of her death. No charges will be leveled at Madam Harris, for her artistry with the shot gun, since Madam Wilson was slaughtered on the gallery of the Harris home.

Mr. Hyman's mulatto grandson, - "Goon Sam" Cohen was found guilty of manslaughter by a jury this morning, regarding a scuffle down the road a week or two ago. I'll bet Mr. Hyman must be rattling about all over town by now, and I doubt if his money bags will out much ice, what with the type of judge said to be on the bench.

As for our local friends who bounced bottles and things at the honkey-tonk last Friday night, I guess they will all escape jail sentences by a fine of \$125.00 each, and that may have a tendency to slow thing up a little this coming week end, but things will be going full blast again before Christmas. "Those niggers are sights", is the way the Madam would have summed it up.

As for the enclosures, I find that little Miss Denholme must have been in a terrible hurry when she listed the Ritz Tower at 57th Street and Clark Avenue. If memory serves, it used to stand on the corner of Park in the old days, unless you all have been pushing it around considerably during my absence.

3947

What with gardening at Arenbourg and Melrose and some further publicity I wanted to contrive for the Alexandria project, I told the clerk I would see no pilgrims today, and thus saved much time for myself thereby. He told me at sundown that there had been ever so many people passing this way, including photographers in photographically equipped trucks of some sort, but none of them got in the front gate. By Friday I shall have much of the current stuff I have in mind down on paper and Saturday and Sunday is sufficient time to allot to pilgrims, of which there will undoubtedly be droves from farther afield, as for instance in the Dallas-Fort Worth section where people read the Picayune last Sunday and, being a little too far removed to make the jaunt on the same day, will undoubtedly hit on the impending week end to explore. What with the forest fires blazing and the ground so dry, it would be ever so nice for me if a fine drizzle would start in about Friday noon and continue throughout the week end.

And don't you find the reference in Ora's letter to the New Iberia find to be ever so interesting. On reading it I almost felt the urge to pry up Grandpere and see what I could discover immediately beneath him.

Obviously Madam Rand must be stirring things up a little in the Alexandria neighborhood, although I have not heard from here directly. Still, I had a telephone from one of her friends who had done a tour here in August, advising me of the pleasure she had experienced in running into the Picayune article, and branching off onto a quickened interest she had recently experienced in exploring some old pictures belonging to some unpleasant relative living somewhere in Rapides Parish. It seems there are two or three portraits which have been kicking about under a tumbled down bed in some forgotten attic which are of interest, not so much in their composition as in the fact that they were executed by a daughter, I understood her to say, of old Gilbert Stuart. Frankly, I didn't know before that Gilbert Stuart ever had a daughter, and I still am in the dark as to what kind of portraits she might have stirred up. But be that as it may, it is interesting, I think, that already the faint repercussions of the impending detonations to be set off shortly are already suggesting that the renaissance promises to be worth while. Even though the first bang carries its reverberations no further than the confines of Alexandria, I guess it will have been worth while, and if, on the other hand, the thing echoes up and down the State and jumps around to cover the other 48, - well so much the better.

The enclosed sample is the type of card I shall use tentatively as a sample for the Alexandria Project both in Rapides and Natchitoches Parishes. It is merely a suggestion, however, and if you find some essential or other missing, I shall welcome your recommendations. So much a-cookin', - life sure is fun....

3948

Friday, December 2nd, 1949. Most every town in the neighborhood of Alexandria has been visited by the pilgrims. The Picayune piece is all right. To borrow a line from the Madam: "If it pleases him, it tickles me to death." They did not come to hand in a telephone call from Mrs. Holloman. She advises me some person, claiming to be the great, great, granddaughter of Grandpere "comes up for air" to announce that her great, great-grandfather hailed not from Louisiana but Haiti. How interesting and how untrue. Mrs. Holloman threatens to pass this way on Tuesday next.

That will fit in neatly with my plans, for the local Regent of the D. A. R. threatens to come out with Ora and Dr. Young on Monday, and what with some particulars I shall assemble from the Monday visit, I shall be able to slap into prospective prospect a print on Tuesday. And so the business turns.

Pilgrims getting inside the front gate were kept to a trickle today, although there was an exception made in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin G. Pinac. He is a member of the Cotton Exchange and a friend of the owner of the Picayune in spite of which he is still a very civilized person. His wife has charm and was once the mistress of one of the historic old Charleston homes. They were heading for Memphis or some such place but will return to the Crescent City a couple of days before Christmas. I have an idea they may be heard from again, for they were crazy about Melrose.

And the mention of Memphis reminds me of Tennessee and that impells me to mention that I have finished with the Lewis and Clark volume. I wonder why I never before had learned that Mr. Clark, following the Expedition, became first Governor of the Louisiana Territory and while Governor, was murdered on the old Natchez Trace at some point where it runs up into Tennessee. I have read a few books about the Trace, but I never heard any mention of the murder of this distinguished man on that famous highway before. Perhaps I had better advise Roane regarding the matter, and if she does not already know it, she, as President of the Natchez Trace, might dust off old Mr. Lewis and so spatter a little more gore across the pages of that historic highway.

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3949

As I was crossing the road this morning, returning to the front gate from the store, I heard an assortment of childish screams and on glancing around, saw a half dozen little pickaninies, all about 4 or 5 years old, go flying in all directions, while down the road, lumbering along at full tilt, thundered an imposing mountain of beef. It was George or George's twin, Jim. With the colored folks always scared to death of him, - I suppose it is his odd hump and his swaying wattles, they always take to the fence whenever he appears. But in spite of his frightening bulk, George was in the friendliest mood. Apparently he had sighted me from afar, and recalling our recent contact in the African House, was bent on renewing our old association. I took a few steps in his general direction and he tossed his head in the air with surprising grace, and within a few yards, brought himself to a full halt, his nose just touching my shoulder. There was an ominous silence from down the bank where the children had all scurried and were standing stiff with fear. With a majestic heft completely of disdain, George slowly turned his head in their direction, and at the same moment, wiggled an ear for me to rub. The children looked on in amazement, and obviously wholly terrified. Then, after a couple of minutes, George turned his head in the opposite direction, and wiggled his other ear for me to stroke. I waved to the children, and what with the beast's head turned away from them, they all scrambled back up to the highway, and flew toward the store with a speed they will probably never exceed again. Some pilgrims slowed down, with a view to stopping, but fright at such a spectacle overcame their enthusiasm for historic plantations, and off they drove. I waited until they were out of sight, and after a couple of friendly slaps in parting, I went on about my business and George lumbered off down the road. By no light there is no telling what the pilgrims are concocting about this wild region, but what I should rather hear is the tale being spun by some imaginative colored child in some little old cabin somewhere or other along the bayous of Melrose. Surely by now George has been metamorphosed into a dinosaur while I have undoubtedly been transformed into the ghost of Uncle Israel.

Thanks to a splendid moon tonight, I shall take a brisk turn on the terrace at Arenbourg and thence back to Yucca where I want to read a page or two of E. F. Gauthier's The Desert, being a 1935 study of the Sahara. I have but a single excuse for reading the piece, since it is that or some sort of a business about the cowboy, whose name I don't recall. Perhaps 1935 pictures of the Sahara are a little out of date, what with all the doings in that area during the 1940's, but I'll have a go at it anyway, and if I succeed in stumbling over a couple of sand dunes and camels, I'll perhaps recognize them as still authentic elements of the place. Mr. Bachelier knew the Sahara well and aside from personal knowledge of the place probably knows this book by heart, or did know it. And so to Arenbourg.....

1321

3950

Sunday, December 4th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Never was I more glad to receive mail than on Saturday when your air mail came through. What with your earlier cold plus what I foresaw as a hruly-burly Thanksgiving season, made me speculate in my mind from day to day as to how things were going.

I am so sorry you have had such a time of it. From people who have taken various drug treatments, I gather that while they are marvelous in their curative powers, the durgs themselves take such a temporary toll that during the interim, one can but wonder if the game be worth the candle.

I have followed weather reports from your neighborhood, too, and have been impressed during the past couple of weeks at the unmistakable signs of Winter that have predominated the weather charts along the upper Atlantic coast.

I pray you to favor yourself just as much as you can. Try not to over-tax yourself any more than can be avoided, and please don't try to write when every ounce of energy can be so much better expended in conserving and building back your own good health.

It is an unforgiveable fault on my part that I have failed to mention the copy of Emma and the papers from Helen Baldwin that I threatened to send ever so far back. They sit here on my desk, what with a couple of other things, but I am determined to get them off to you this week. I can't see why I failed to mention them long before this late date. Please forgive me if you can.

As was to be expected, we were heaving burdened with pilgrims this week end, but they were all pleasant people and I enjoyed them all. Somehow on Saturday, at her request, I helped Celeste plant some lovely camellias which J. H. had brought her from Alexandria on Friday night. She and J. H. went into town at first dark, what with the inauguration of the Natchitoches lights and a dance at the country club. Remaining at home, I was finddling about a couple of hours after dark when Lo!

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3951

someone called to me from the gallery, the doors being wide open into the well lighted interior. It was Madame de Montespan and her brother, a very intelligent youth, of Baton Rouge. She said a lady and her own daughter were in a car at the front gate. I invited them in. It was raining, having started about 5 p.m., and thus had dampened their prospects at seeing the illuminations in town, and so they stopped off here. I do not encourage nocturnal visitors and recommended they relish the present exception. Mme. de Montespan hazarded the guess that she could tell what I had been doing during the day, - planting camellias. I concurred. There was more talk about camellias and she asked if I had planted them in the white garden. I said I had not, and then somehow I grasped that I really should have said I hadn't been planting camellias, and so I lied and said I had been planting gardenias, and that I had seen no camellias. She then hazarded the guess that J. H. must have forgotten to give them to me and that they were probably parked in a garage, or some such. I concurred again. For then I learned that on Friday night she had been present when a flock of them had been purchased "for me". I declared I would look into the matter with the dawn.

And with dawn and catching up with J. H., I told him I thought it was kind of him to permit me to plant "my" gardenia's in his wife's garden, but in the future, I wish he would advise me in advance that they had originally been purchased for me so I would get his wavering intentions all mixed up in my mind and that of his mistress. I like Mme. de Montespan with the proviso that she will stay put in the city of her residence. I shall not receive her at Yucca again, however, after first dark, reserving, as I am determined to do, my residence for myself after first dark.

As for your disappointment in failing to receive the Picayune of Sunday last past.....I reckon the copy I am sending by air mail on Monday morning when this letter is posted, will already have reached your true hand, and the additional copy will follow shortly. Perhaps you will have already received various enclosures in the mean time that will give some hint of reaction to the article in this area.

Some be-diamonded D. A. R. dowagers from Shreveport came to see me this morning and before I had invited them to my boudoir to discuss a little business, the lady doctor arrived with a friend, for a little tour and chat. I was glad to see the whole shooting match, but hustled the D. A. R.'s off and found time to chat with both Dr. Eleanor and friend but for a couple of minutes, as they had to go on to Beaufort where they were expected. They will return here this week perhaps, the D. A. R.'s during the last week of the current month. The lady doctor said she and Don gave the Aswells a fine goose for their thanksgiving dinner, but Rosalyn insisted on keeping it as a pet.....

3952

Monday, December 5th, 1949.

Memorandum:

I wouldn't really know what the attitude in the retail trade might be, - customers toward the merchants, merchants toward the customers, in such high flown institutions as R. H. Macy of New York, Barker Brothers of Los Angeles, or any of the retail communities in between, but something tells me that said relationships would certainly be different if they reflected the carryings on at Alphonse's honkey-tonk, hard by Arenbourg, last night.

Wet groceries were in vast demand, it seems, and although the honkey-tonk isn't supposed to operate on Sundays, Alphonse did have in a few select patrons, such as Mr. and Mrs. Puny, Ezra and his wife and so on.

About 11 o'clock my friend Elam, his uncle Jesse, and their respective wives, knocked on the door for admittance but were refused. According to Alphonse the prospective customers thereupon be-fitted themselves with blunderbuses and tried lead, exploded at some distance, as a persuasive, for opening up the place. Alphonse responded with his shotgun. By midnight, things had quieted down, a kind of armistice, but soon after midnight the battle for beer was resumed, continuing until 2 a.m.

I don't know just how such a scuffle would eventuate on a grander scale, but I assume R. H. Macy would probably wheel up heavy artillery or at least mount a few nests of machine guns on that funny little building at the corner of 34th Street and Broadway. What with most merchants turning hand-springs to entice customers into their emporiums, it does seem odd for this Cane River institution to be trying to stave them off with gun fire.

But it was all quiet when I marched up to Arenbourg at dawn and so I assumed the battle was probably finished, and everybody probably trying to sleep it off.

When I went to the post office about 7:30, I noticed some hogs rooting in the front garden at Melrose, under the big oak. J. H. always warns people on the place to keep up their hogs, but few of them pay much attention, merely keeping them penned during the day and they by stealth, turning them loose at night. I said nothing at the store, thinking I might run the things out on my way back, but I didn't see them on my return. Then, a little before 8, I heard another cannonade. Two fine porkers of Elams were slain by the overseer and two

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equally fine specimens of "Cousin Lug's", cousin lug being
Mattie's cousin, the wife of Temite.

The owners were notified, and when I saw J. H. at noon,
he remarked that "all us-es ought to be havin' crackling by
first dark tonight".

But it turns out that Elam and Jesse will not get their
cracklings, although Elam did dress his pork during the day. About
5 o'clock this evening, however, the Sheriff, on complain of
Alphonse, came down and arrested Elam and Jesse, and so they
dined in jail.

So turns things in Melrose, and we ought to be getting
quite a reputation, what with our recent murders, arrests, etc.

I had pilgrims this morning until dinner time, and this afternoon
Oran came with Dr. Arnold, Miss Somers and so on. Before they
had departed there were others who came, and I am glad the day
is done. The Regent of the local D. A. R. invited me to speak
on December 12th, - did I say December, - but I declined to do
so until after the Alexandria Project had been launched. She
accordingly asked about the second Monday in January, and I
accepted. Thus things will be going to roll, I hope.

Tomorrow I am expecting more pilgrims and in the afternoon
I shall run over the Town Talk publicity with Mrs. Holloman,
put some finishing touches on the Picayune Art article and arrange
with her to see about 2,500 extra run-offs of the newspaper
account of the Alexandria speech to be sent to all the D. A. R.
Chapters throughout the nation.

Mrs. Band telephoned this morning. She says she has some
illustrations that may be suitable for the Picayune article for
me and will bring them on Wednesday when she passes this way with
some guests. Dr. Combs telephoned from the college to ask if he
might bring some scientists out on Saturday. I am going to
strive to keep Thursday and Friday all to myself, which will be
a good trick, if I can do it.

I saw Log for a moment this morning. I had been chatting
with him and Dee-dee and Little Robert and Clyde Anthony on
Saturday just before they headed home for Little River. They
were quite sober and made a gay picture heading down the road,
Clyde driving the tractor and all the others and their wives
and children sitting a-top a flat, low-slung wagon tied to the
tractor. It seems that along the route, the wagon struck a bump
in the road, pitching Log from his perch, the front and back
iron wheels of the wagon running over his leg. But by some
miracle it wasn't broken, and although he is still limping today,
he is able to work. You might file this under the duller or
dull letters. Let's hope I improve a little on the morrow.....

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Tuesday, December 6th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Fair weather, a fair mail, fairly busy day of fair
dictation and fairly tired tonight.

The moon was up before Mr. Brew passed this way and I
accompanied him on his way out as far as the bamboo hedge,
just to see how pretty the rising moon might be and in order to
sweep away some of the cobwebs that had formed during the
reading of the mail. Turning back from the bamboo, I
thought I saw Taffy gaily tripping along by the sun dial.
I called to him, and Peter, passing on the far side of the
hedge, jumped over to see if I could give him some wrapping
paper to do up a box of candy he had just won at cards, something
he wanted to present to his niece. I told him I thought I had
some, but leaned over to stroke Taffy's head, for by then
the beautiful animal had almost reached me. Just as I extended
my arm Peter shouted:

"Watch out.....that there varmit ain't no Taffy.....Taffy
is all black excusin' up in front and that there varmit 's got
plenty of white on his tail."

And sure enough he did have, and on second glance appeared
to be ever so much larger than Taffy. But he seemed friendly
enough but a little hesitant, and so I returned to the house
and found a fine piece of corn bread which I took out
to the sun dial where the animal was still breezing about, --it never
seems as though their feet touch the ground, they move with such
surprising lightness. And so the big old fellow came up to
investigate, and seemed to enjoy the little monologue I
indulged in with him while he ate. I am beginning to
wonder if Taffy may have communicated his finding to his
friend. Peter, however, was but completely skeptical about
the poor skunks ultimate intentions and wouldn't get within
20 feet of him. I still remember what Peter said about
Taffy:

"It jus' look like I ain't got no confidence in him."

Mrs. Holloman arrived rather later than I had expected,
but I had ample time to run through the articles for the Town
Talk and the Picayune with her, recommend some other

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publicity, give her a list of things to attend to prior to January 2nd, and generally prepare ground work for additional details.

She told me she had seen Miss Alberta in New Orleans a couple of weeks ago and she seemed as spry as a kitten. She also said that Barnett Lane had been in Alexandria last week end and she read me a letter he had written her after returning home. She felt her contact with him and the letter both revealed a certain selfishness that charmed her not at all.

She also brought me a letter she had received from W. D. Postell, received in the wake of the Picayune article, in which he told her to keep an eye on Melrose since he felt it was on the verge of assuming another phase of development under my influence. Postell is a nice person but he has certainly over-estimated potentials, I fear. She says some member of the New Orleans Associate Press office has asked if she could get him in to Melrose. I expressed the opinion she could if he, by return courtesy, could get the Alexandria Project unusual space on the A.P. tickers.

There was a nice letter from Mary Whitaker, - Alice's sister, from Baton Rouge which I am not forwarding at the moment, needing to take some excerpts from it for the Picayune Art thing. She says the oil portrait by Audubon of her grandfather Gordon, at the age of 9, is not signed. Since Mrs. Audubon and Mrs. Gordon, mere, were sisters, and the picture has come down directly to the present generation from mother to daughter, there seems to be no doubt as to the authenticity of the canvas, but I do wish the thing were signed. The deer's head which I want to use for the article is signed 1843, and on its margin is written to this effect: "This doe's head was killed by Harris on Mount Vernon and painted by me" --and the last line cannot be made out and the signature is not present. I suppose the Mount Vernon referred to may have been the plantation in the Kingston neighborhood, a little to the south and east of Natchez, perhaps 10 miles. And yet I believe Audubon was never in Natchez after 1823, and so I can't exactly figure out how I can link up old James J. with an Adams County plantation in the year the picture is dated. It is possible, I suppose, it might have been painted in Virginia on the George Washington Mount Vernon, but I am not at all certain as to where Mr. Bird Painter may have been in that year. It seems to me the elephant edition was being delivered in this country in 1846, and I assume Audubon may have been in Europe in the early 1840's, but just where he was when the picture in question was painted, I cannot imagine without some additional particulars.

And tomorrow come the Rands, and after that, except for the Thursday snipmayers, I hope to get to gardening, if it will only get chilly.....

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Wednesday, December 7th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The Travels of Marco Polo was listed in the December Talking Book Topics, coming to hand in this morning's post, and on reading the list, I ordered it immediately from the New Orleans Public Library.

Two hours later came Mr. and Mrs. Horace Hill, long residents of Pekin and Hon-Kong, with many a tale to tell me of the old trade routes in China they know that are still labeled Marco Polo.

The Hills came with the Rand party, - which included the divorced Mrs. Holloman, predecessor of the present Mrs. Holloman, and some charming people named Davison of Dallas, mother of Mrs. Hill, I believe, and Mr. Hill's parents and so on. It was altogether a delightful meeting and the Horace Hills remained for half an hour after the rest had gone on to the Rand Camp, and where the three of us joined the larger group for coffees about 4:30.

The Hills are probably 40-ish, and altogether civilized. They have lived in Algeria, Persia, China and heaven knows where. Mr. Hill is with the Texas Company I believe. They head back for Hong-Kong again tomorrow, and before saying goodbye, asked if they might return to the Cane River as soon as three years have elapsed and they are back again from the Orient.

With so many people about, there wasn't much chance for conversation but we got in quite a few licks during the walk we had across the cotton patch from Yucsa to the Rand Camp. I so wished you might have been present, you would have so much enjoyed their little sidelights, cast on contemporary Asia. Before the war, they used to go out quite a bit in Pekin. They spoke of some very elegant dinners given by the Generalissimo and Mme. Chang in a little palace outside the capitol along the lake. They said they thought the Generalissimo personally was not interested in money but that the graft up and down the line in the Government, and especially in the Army made the old gang rings of Tammany and Boss Tweed look like pikers. They said everyone knew that that Nationalist soldiers never got paid, seldom got food and mighty little equipment, - all funds being sequestered by the officers, and so it wasn't at all surprising the Nationalist Army just melted away. They think the Chinese aren't interested

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in any of the ideologies or isms and that the autocratic rule of the Communists will be no harder on them than what they have always experienced, and that they will not subscribe to it but will probably submit to it, just as they have always had to submit for countless ages to hopeless graft and lopsided theories of individual responsibility.

I reckon it is pretty trite for me to repeat all these things to you since your own acquaintance with the daily press has given you full particulars on such details, but I pass them along regardless, feeling that you may be glad to have such personal opinions that are passed along first-hand from people who have long lived within the borders of the Celestial Empire.

I believe the Hills are without racial prejudices and therefore are not deterred, as are so many white in the Orient, about accepting invitations to homes where the Chinese families discover true friends in this couple from the other side of the globe. I should so much have liked you to have been present. But I imagine they may be the type of people who exchange letters with sympathetic souls, so perhaps we shall hear from them from time to time before they make their next round.

Mr. Hill, in dismissing the stupidity of racial tomfoolery, remarked:

"As Alexander Woolcott once remarked: 'Some people are born great; some people have greatness thrust upon them; and some people are snubbed by the D. A. R.'"

I had never heard that one before, and I liked it.

From all this talk, it would sound as though I had passed this Year Harbor anniversary doing nothing but getting tangled up with people. But I got the day going nicely at Arenbourg tangled up with weeds, although the weather remains too warm to transplant anything. I did quite a bit of privet hedge trimming, too, and as that was long over due, I was entranced to get that a little better under control.

Just after returning to Yucca, Log passed by, leaving his tractor behind the bamboo where he was ploughing in the fields beyond. He walks pretty well, but still limps, and there are vast scabs on his ankles and legs where the wheels of the wagon entangled him. I reckon he was mighty lucky not getting any bones broken, especially as one arm got entangled in the spokes of a wheel, too.

The mail was choked with a lot of stuff today, much of it in long hand and now I had better begin struggling with some of it. Have thought of you so often today.....

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Thursday, December 8th, 1949.

Memorandum:

I got my wish, for aside from the Knipmayers this morning, there were no pilgrims. The fact is that a chill wind, blowing out of the North East, gave a clear picture of what the radio was describing as weather to the North and East where Winter appears to have put in unmistakable evidences that December is upon us.

I was glad to be rid of pilgrims but resented the sharp wind that made working out of doors a difficulty if not a hazard. But the pin point sting of the drizzle afforded an excellent excuse for me to stick pretty close to my desk during the afternoon, and I am glad I got a lot of stuff cranked out, and Texas had better brace herself, for on the morrow I shall deluge certain sections of the Lone Star with much propaganda for the Survey. My plan is to use the same method in Louisiana and Texas as States that I am using in the Parishes of Rapides and Natchitoches, and thus impelling both to forge ahead in making preparations to launch the business nationally.

There was a nice letter from Dr. Young of the local college, - its Agricultural Department. He passed along word that so far as the records show covering imported persimmons, the first brought into this country from Japan arrived in 1872, and as these readily lent themselves to budding and grafting, have done exceptionally well when thus joined to native trees. I am glad to have the date on their introduction, for this seems to give another piece of evidence to the unique class in which the Arenbourg variety finds itself, for three oldsters in the neighborhood have spoken to me of the old, old tree from which the present buds were taken. Because of the unusual size of its fruit, they remember it and the efforts made by the oldsters to keep the fruit in a cool place so, in lieu of oranges, it might be used for gifts at Christmas time. They all declare it was an old, old tree when they were children, - and that was 80 years ago, from all of which I conclude that this particular item must have been well established long before the advent of the Oriental varieties were introduced in the '70s.

I did a little reading last night before folding up, - Roy Chapman Andrews' Under A Lucky Star. A section of the book seems to more or less parallel certain chapters I have read in one of his other books, but the chapters about the whales was new and I found myself wondering back in retrospect to

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the Museum of Natural History and the big old whales that I remember there, suspended from the ceiling. It's a well edited book and for the most part appeals to the general reader now doubt, - which is quite an accomplishment for anyone with such a scientific turn of mind.

On the home front the weather made plantation operations approach the point of suspension. My friend Elam, is still in jail, but J. H. brought him home for a while this afternoon, for last night drunken Dooley crawled in through a window of Elam's vacant cabin and broke up quite a bit of his furniture, and so Elam came down with J. H. this afternoon to check up on his losses. When the boys by dint of too much boisterousness succeed in getting themselves in jail, J. H. usually declares that he is going to have nothing to do about them, and invariably, within a few days, goes up and empties the place, - possibly so there will be a place for a new batch when the next week end approaches. J. H. is always on the side of Mercy but while the laxity with which the law operates in the South, I reckon the fact that anyone of influence can swing open doors at leisure is but the positive side of a picture on the reserves of which one finds a negative print where, in the place of Mercy, one canery among irresponsible and contemptible white folks can, with almost equal ease, disregard the general rules of Justice and so make life doubly miserable for the unlucky colored inmates.

While I think of it, I must mention something amusing the Hills recounted to me yesterday just after the other guests had headed out for the Band camp. It seems that during the little chat we had been having while all the guests were here, Mrs. Hill had been eyeing the "banjo table" with interest, and she asked me, when only she, her husband and I were left, if it had anything to do about a bidet. I merely lifted off the top and let them see for themselves. She said she had had an experience with one which is not likely to forget. During the war she was in some way connected with the Government, but I know not in what capacity. Be that as it may she at one time found herself in Portugal, Lisbon, I believe, and there received a secret document which was to be carefully read and destroyed. In the seclusion of her bedroom in the hotel, which was without a fireplace, she read the document, and then finding no place to burn it, finally decided the bidet was the only but perfect bit of furniture in the room for which she could lay hold on as a glorified ashburner. She accordingly lighted the rather fat assortment of papers in a room already a bit cold, and all went well until just as the final scrap had been burned, the porcelain of the bidet cracked, and the whole thing crashed to the floor, making a terrific thump. The racket brought forth the manager from below, and he insisted on her paying for the ruined furniture, which she willingly did, but was a little flabbergasted when he insisted she take it with her when she quitted the place, - a perfectly respectable lady, marching through the streets, clutching at a broken bidet....

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Friday, December 9th, 1949.

Memorandum: I think you're going to like this.

I am going to try to play a trick on the D. A. R. What with the faint-heartedness of the Picayune as regards color, it is doubtful if I can put it over, but at least I shall have the fun of trying, and if I succeed, the publicity will be marvelous, - and withal, incorporating a barb in the business.

What I am fixing to do is to feature, among the newly discovered paintings of historic value in the Art article is the oil portrait of the first American opera singer. I shall contrive to have that illustration at least as prominent, but, if possible, the dominant one of the collection to demonstrate the importance of the Survey.

As you know, the first American opera singer was none other than Eliza Greenfield, born a slave in Natchez. By rigging up the article so that the attention will be particularly directed at this illustration, the artifice will turn out to be a shock for all the D. A. R.'s who see it, - and I shall contrive to have many of them stumble over it, for in reality, the very organization that put thumbs down on Marian Anderson will find itself rescuing from oblivion a singer of the same race, whose likeness will tend to serve as a vehicle for the girls to ride into publicity throughout the South. Can you imagine what a flurry there will be among those stiff-necked dowagers when the Picayune links their organization with the discovery that an earlier Marian Anderson has at long last become the object of their especial pride.

I am sending the unframed portrait to Alexandria this week end by Madam Rand and I shall use it in my address on the 2nd. At the same time, I shall send a note to Mrs. Holloman to have the thing photographed, for the Picayune will pay for that service, and, if luck runs smooth, the photograph will appear slap under the big letters D. A. R. in the title of the piece, and when the thing becomes available, I shall send it to some Northern publishers, directing their attention to the paradox, and let them have a go at the thing, - all of which ought to turn considerable light on the project itself, - and at the expense of the D. A. R.'s themselves.

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My radio speaks of a water shortage in your area and the advent of colder weather. We are short of water, here, too, but with a thermometer in the 70's, and bushes continuing to unfold their Spring blossoms, I can't make up my mind what kind of weather may be in the offing, in spite of the promise of rain which is promised daily but never comes through.

It is impossible to do any transplanting of course, under such circumstances, but sooner or later the sap will be forced down by lower temperatures, and then the spades will fly in an attempt to make up for lost time.

Tomorrow's list of potential pilgrims included Dr. and Mrs. Erwin and Dr. and Mrs. Coombs, for Dr. Coombs has never done a tour. But the Welfare Office telephoned me today to say that Mrs. Coombs is out of town for the week end, her uncle having died in Alexandria, I believe, so I reckon that pilgrimage is off.

I finished R. C. Andrew's Under A Lucky Star last night and liked the concluding chapters. It is interesting that while the book is autobiographical, Mr. Andrews never makes any reference to his first marriage, and one never learns about it, except through inference when, following a phrase about my second marriage in the 1930's, he rushes on to refer to his son, a flyer in the Army in the 1940's. I don't recall ever having heard any mention of his first wife in the old days when Andrews' publicity was all over the place. If you ever glance into the concluding chapters of the book, you will be amused at the exchange of correspondence between Dr. Andrews and Mayor LaGuardia.

I am posting an outline of the Alexandria project to Texas this week end, counting on the holiday rush to keep the thing from being released for publication, but hoping that the tendency toward fervor in favor of Texas may impell one group or another to espouse the hope of being the State that will present the project to the National Committee when the latter assembles in Washington or where ever early in the Spring.

Thus Alexandria and Natchitoches can have the honor of having originally sponsored the thing, as within the individual State and by completing their surveys, and offer them as models, while Texas will find a sop of glory for itself in sponsoring the thing on a larger scale.

Forgive this exceedingly dull letter. I do hope I may do better on the next go-round. I have a couple of untutored clients awaiting my services, hoping I will write some Christmas messages on their behalf. Do hope you are taking care of you.....

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Sunday, December 12th, 1949.

Memorandum:

An atmospheric phenomenon is going on that is at once interesting and enervating. The big old blizzard sweeping down from Canada and deluging Wyoming with snowbanks seems to be attracting a flow of warm breezes from the Gulf that have been sweeping over us for the past couple of days, bringing some moisture and unusual warmth. I am hoping the snow will turn Eastward and strike off Kansas way and so never succeed in blasting the Cane River vegetation, much of which is in new leaf and all of which is on the point of exploding.

On Saturday morning, with a view to laboring at Arenbourg, I demonstrated my good sense by standing up one minute and falling down in a fence post hole the next. Had it been Saturday night, what with the honkey-tonk hard by, there might have been some excuse, but as the hour was dawn, I cast about in vain for any reason save stupidity. I hobbled back to Yucca without difficulty and continued to receive pilgrims, but I shall be forced to favor the ankle for a couple of days, so far as spading and such like is concerned.

On Saturday afternoon along about first dark, the Whitneys of New Orleans passed this way heading for Natchitoches to view the illuminations. The Whitney Bank in New Orleans is an old institution and, oddly enough, the Whitneys are still in control. They are pleasant people who get about considerably, I guess, what with a summer home in Connecticut, etc., and because they do travel, I was particularly interested in something Mr. Whitney told me. He said they had seen the Picayune artifice a couple of weeks ago and they were so struck by the odd appearance of the African House that they speculated with each other as to the improbability that any building in America could actually look like that, and finally came to the conclusion that in reality the photograph was undoubtedly one of those trick things contrived by persons who dabble in photography to give an impression of a single picture whereas in reality it is merely a trick of some kind. Naturally they were entranced when they got around to see the building, and, for their good fortune, found it ever so much more interesting than the photograph had suggested.

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There was but a single fly in the ointment, and I could slaughter the three Whitney children whose 10 or 12 years should have endowed them with more sense. I was at the foot of the third page of some stuff I was fixing to get into the mail on the Alexandria Project when I chanced to glance in the direction of my typewriter, to see the youngsters hanging away on the keyboard. As I couldn't remember where I had made the transition from page 2 to page 3, I had to tear the whole thing up and do it over again last night. The natural curiosity of childhood is such a virtue that I am forever applauding it, except when it moves over on to ranges that are out of childhood bounds.

J. H. departed for Pecane Island, which seems to be some place in the Gulf, for a couple of days of vacationing. It seems to be a big hunting region, but as he would never go in for waiting for a duck to make up its mind, I am sure his visit will be more of a business nature. Tonight, as I was taking a message to Celeste who had not returned from town until first dark, a car stopped by the front gate. --Mme. de Montespan who had brought me bottle of port. She was accompanied by the same people who were with her a week ago. I chatted with them for a moment but did not invite them to descend from their chariot. It was kind of them to make such a presentation but it seemed better to me that I take the opportunity to discourage visits. I trust this will block any further ones. Referring to the enclosure, what in the world do you suppose anybody wants with a Reading Machine of his own. I have written that question in response to this letter, on the risk of seeming ungracious. Since the Government supplies and services a machine for life and only the blind can obtain records from the libraries, I can't for the life of me imagine what the advantage might be in owning one outright. If I get a response that reveals the answer or if you have already solved the mystery, I shall be glad to have light thrown on the matter for me.

With the weather so warm and everyone in shirt sleeves, it seems odd to realize that Christmas isn't so far away.

A little package goes forward in this same mail, and will probably reach you, accordingly, a few days after this Memo comes to hand. Perhaps you will want to unwrap it in the office. There is nothing in it anyone might see except for a single photo in the large envelope. Do hope your week end hasn't been too hectic and that your drought has eased with amplitude.....

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Sunday

Monday, December 12th, 1949.

Memorandum:

If memory serves, I believe I gave Sunday's date as the 12th instead of the 11th, which, in view of the fact that neither this nor it were worth the "powder and shot", it error in date makes not the slightest difference.

It has rained here all day and I have been hoping some of the clouds may carry their freight to the Catskills so that you all may receive the benefit thereof. And tonight it is still raining and possibly a little cooler, but apparently still much warmer than the Shreveport area where according to the radio it was snowing this afternoon.

From all reports, it was a quiet week end up and down Cane River, the first one of such a nature in ever so long, - no scuffles, no murders, no auto wrecks. And so everyone was better fitted for Monday morning's labors than at any time during the season, but the rain, of course, knocked all plantation business in the head and the laborers might better have remained at home, sleeping off the rigors of other week-ends.

Mrs. Coombs dropped in for a few minutes this afternoon to apologize for not having put in any appearance with Dr. Coombs for a tour on Saturday or Sunday. Her uncle died, carrying her off to Texas by so doing, and what with the heap of weather they experienced in that quarter, it must have been a tiresome business all round. Dr. Coombs is deep in the mysteries of embryo-ology, or some such, and appears to be on the verge of doing something about a flock of unhatched chicks which are threatening, it appears, to be on the point of proving something or other in that vast realm of science which may quite possibly be ever so wonderful when the final results have been set forth and applied to animals and human beings but whose mysteries at the moment are so profound that I am quite in the dark as to how and why the whole thing is so important.

Perhaps I mentioned before that there is quite a joke among the scientists about a certain building on the local campus. Never do two or more of these learned men pass the fine new edifice that one or the other doesn't make a gesture in its direction, remarking the while:

"Our new building".

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It seems the current budget called for a fine new building to house certain much needed laboratories and the building itself was well under construction when somebody or other brought pressure to bear on the politicians who, in a twinkling, altered the purpose for which it had been begun, transforming it from an ultra modern structure to house the latest wrinkle in scientific endeavor, and before scarcely anyone realized what was going on, the thing converted into a building for Religion. There must have been so many chapels down the ages metamorphosed into more mundane housing units, but this is the first example I have run across in modern times where the laboratory at its inception was wisked by some slight of hand into a place to laud the Lord, and not through the medium of test tubes but by the transformation of the chromium and glass into something to house a Biblical atmosphere.

I made up my mind today I ought to do something about the stupid name of Hot Wells, Louisiana. After all, during the long regime there used to be so much talk about "hot oil", and well suggests oil in this region and "hot oil wells" sounds like nothing of a curative nature, and so I think I shall go after the Kiwanis Club of Rapides Parish with a suggestion they do something about a new name forthwith before the popularity of the place, already expanding, fastens the Hot Wells name of the place too firmly. I think something like Alexandria Spa would do ever so much better, or practically any other name, if someone will only suggest one more to anybody's like, and whatever be the choice, it is bound to be an improvement on Hot Wells, don't you think so.

I had a five minute cup of coffee with Celest and Madam Regard this morning. Poor Celest the fact she has been in Alexandria twice during the past week seems to have given her a great impulse to travel the road at the drop of the hat, - and if the hat doesn't drop, she apparently can't resist the impulse to push it a little. She said, apropos of nothing:

"When did you say you are going to address the Alexandria D. A. R., and when did you say you were going to invite me to drive you down?" -- I answered her as best I could, to which I responded with seemingly casual candor:

"January 2nd is the date, and I am not inviting you to accompany me until sometimes following the first week of 1950."

She protested she couldn't understand and so I told her I could elucidate and among other things, I had planned not to invite her, but since the matter had come up so unexpectedly, I would take the present opportunity to ask her not to look off an invitation. It was kind of her to offer to drive me down, but I shall prefer to leave all of Melrose behind me on that occasion..

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Tuesday, December 13th, 1949.

Memorandum: Fourty million times would be insufficient in ways of expression to give any concept of my pleasure in receiving greetings for Arenbourg's birthday, which are promptly being conveyed and for my own selfish self, what with the assurance which an envelope in a familiar hand brought with it.

It goes without saying that I am terribly sorry to learn of the prolonged, --may I say, --scuffle, you have had with illness. May it please God to free you from any more such onslaughts. Verily, you have had more than your share for the entire season, and may the balance of the year witness "Good Health to All from Rexall" bursting in every bud.

Frankly, I had hoped against hope during the past week that things were on the mend and that it was business only that was stacking up against a billion lines of endeavor. But I was wrong in not expressing my doubts, for had I done so, I should have pleaded with you to conserve strength by letting any physical expression of the season's greetings pass along, knowing full well what energies are sapped in any metropolitan neighborhood by pre-holiday demands. If you only will exercise the good judgement of giving some thought to your own good health, nothing in this world could make me more happy, and what with Arenbourg's birthday coming round on such an imposing scale, I shall feel rich indeed in the telepathetic pleasures I shall experience throughout the entire balance of the season.

And thanks for your vast expenditures in strength in writing me so interestingly, there are so many points I should like to touch on that I shall not find space to breathe about in this single sitting. And thanks no end for assisting me with such points as the cotton boll, etc., for I lean ever so heavily on you in that direction. So often my mental picture of how the printed word used to look fades from my memory, and as I was always a poor speller, I reckon I often had but the vaguest notion of how some things should have looked in print to begin with. When writing to you, of course, I trip gayly over doubtfully spelled words, feeling perfectly assured that you will sense the meaning, but when writing to others, and especially to those for whom the framework is more important than the contents, I am stabbed by my weakness, and accordingly am doubly indebted to you for helping to set my feet a-right when I

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am forced to embark on paths in less sympathetic directions. If you will be so good as to assist me in such matters from time to time, I shall forever feel ever so indebted to you.

And thanks no end for giving me a glimpse around the literary dial. Everything you had to relate was news to me. Curiously enough, I asked somebody only yesterday what in the world had ever happened to that Louisiana volume of pictures that F. P. Keyes had threatened to bring out this autumn. I think her photographer mentioned November as the probably date of publication, a date possibly delayed by her recent illness in Vermont. I shall not have to read her St. Therese de Liseux, but shall be curious to see if the Yucca and African House pictures were included and what in the world she had to contrive about the Cane River country which she has never seen.

I was glad to know something of the whereabouts of one Harnett Kane in early November, too. Wasn't that odd that you should have tripped slap over him on the air waves during your illness. Is it any wonder your recovery, as a result, was ever so gradual.

Your promise of a comparatively quiet holiday season sounds good, so far as it goes, but I hope the absence of those jumping beans from the local scene will not merely make space for other disturbing elements. Heaven knows the Sunday-Monday combination of Christmas and New Years this season will be marvelous if you can only grab off a little while for the enjoyment of your own domestic surroundings without too many billion people dashing in and out. What a glorious feeling, - you may not have had an opportunity to experience lately, - when one closes the door on the world at the end of the day, assured that the real world of one's self can automatically come into being, without the slightest chance of the door opening again to let in the shattering disturbance of what practical people are pleased to style Reality. Frankly, they are welcome to their own contrivance of that entity, if they will only accord me the privilege of letting me keep mine, --without them and theirs.

The rains continue locally, and how much I hope you are getting heaps of it around the local reservoirs. But in spite of today's drizzles, pilgrims came, including a grandson of old Brigham Young, a Ph.D. living in Iowa, from whom I shall hear again I am sure. He was grand.

J. H. is back from Pecane Island and Elam and Jesse are back in jail, this time for something about Melrose pecanes sold to Mr. Hyman, etc., etc.

Again my thanks to you and to God for all the happiness you brought to Arenbourg and to me today. Please go as much like a snail until after the rush as you possibly can....

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P. S. --I don't quite understand Anne's reference to Joe in regard to the desk. Could she merely be referring to the Picayune photo or one that she has.

Wednesday, December 14th, 1949.

Memorandum: A cold, wind swept day, with both Arenbourg and me pleasantly warmed by the presence of yesterday's grand letter warning us with more tender intensity than could any Louisiana sun in Louisiana.

And while I think of it, and in order that we may keep a check on out-going mail, I notice on my holding shelf a letter addressed to you which may or may not have been there for a day or two, the same having somehow remained secure but behind in the fairly heavy batches that I have been stacking up nightly of late. Perhaps, in view of the infrequency with which you have been able to get to 908 during the immediate past, the absence of this particular item has not been so obvious, but I mention the matter regardless, in order the check may be maintained with constancy.

To me there is nothing more enervating and nothing that is so potent with an impulse to kick one's self around the block than to inadvertently hide something from one's self, as I did a letter from Alice's sister this afternoon, and then be unable to concentrate on anything until the thing has been recovered, and recovery seemingly impossible, although one realizes it is bound to be within one's reach. I wanted to quote from the letter, covering the Audubon things that are heirlooms in the Walworth family, and yet, after one secretary had just read it, - and departed, - and a second had arrived, I simply had to set the place on its ear, - and in doing so, turned up the letter to 908, - and so I count the effort not wasted. Besides, after I had given the thing up as completely lost, I collapsed in my chair, seeking solace by gazing at the gold fish swimming about in the aquarium running along the tier of window panes - the lower tier, appearing in the photo of my desk, - and of course I could have jumped into the aquarium at my foolishness when I noticed the letter I had been tearing all over the place for which, in actuality, was resting with vast calm alongside the aquarium within an inch from the end of my nose.

The mail continues rather heavy. In view of all the demands on your time, I shall try to spare you during this busy season by withholding much of it, but, if you don't mind, I shall pass along a few items that appear to have charm or some other merit from old friends. You will get a laugh out of

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the midnight note from Anne Parish. I shall pen her a few lines tonight, remarking upon the reported success a certain Rhineland physician has with the problem concerning her, and I am sure that would have Anita's approval. And there was a very kind letter from John Knight who identified himself with me in having read Walpole's *The Cathedral* years ago. He read something or other recently which I enjoyed and wrote and told him so. What is surprising about his letter is the fact that it is the first acknowledgement I ever received from any of the readers to whom I have occasionally penned a line of thanks for the pleasure their performances have afforded me.

I didn't see J. H. at supper last night, for he had gone to a bank directors meeting in town, leaving while the Mormon guests were on my lap, but I chatted with him a moment this morning and he told me the grandson of Brigham Young whom I liked so much is a brother-in-law of former Senator Smoot of Utah, and that his son is manager of the great sugarbeet refining corporation of Utah which is supposed to be one of the prize industries under the domination of the Salt Lake City Mormons.

In view of the explosion attendant upon the discovery that my friend, Elam, had participated in "lifting" certain pecanecakes to sell to Mr. Hyman, Elam accompanied J. H. on his drive to town, with a view of going to jail. But in typical J. H. fashion, he transacted business in town, dined at the club and spent the evening at gaming, after which, --Elam having waited for him in the car, he decided that the middle of the night was not the time for anybody to go to jail, and so brought Elam back with him. To quote the late C. G. H., "I declare, Juddy is a sight! There was a heap of chatter at 9 o'clock coffee this morning about some tea or other at Beaufort yesterday, but as I paid scant attention, I don't remember the details. It seems of Mrs. Vernon Cloutier returned from a D. A. R. meeting just as her guests were arriving, and she reported something about a buzzing at the meeting about a guest speaker scheduled for the next meeting of the organization and somehow I seemed to figure in the business, but as I recall, the whole business was tangled up with accounts of the Beaufort holiday decorations, including a dining room table covered by a linen or lace, I know not which, covering a couple of tiny evergreen trees weighting down each end of an ellipse of simulated snow in the center around said snowbank being a border of freshly cut camellias of pure white, -- and the whole thing seemed completely Harper's Bazaar or some such, etc., etc., ad infinitum.

But I do know it was pleasant to get back to Yucca threw a shower of bitter rain and find Beau Mack, the Dark Duke, Peter, Mr. Brew, Murrell, etc., to compare a bit of sense and exchange a bit of non-sense with, and thus get both feet back on the ground.

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Thursday, December 15th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Gold and damp but the promise of a break in the weather along about tomorrow, what with occasional gleams of sunshine this afternoon and a star-spangled sky tonight.

It was hurly-burly around the Melrose store today, what with everyone in this Ward voting on Cotton Control for next year, and everyone seeming to be in favor.

The post continues rather heavy and will grow increasingly so, I suppose. And while I think of it, may I remark upon the December issue of *Ladies Home Journal* and the article with pictures in color of Andrew Jackson's *Hermitage*. I haven't seen it as yet, but Celeste promises to toss on in my direction shortly. J. H. sent me a copy of *Ebony*, the issue carrying the likeness of Mrs. Roosevelt and Dr. Ralph Bunch on the front. That picture ought to do something for my D. A. R. friends if I flashed it on them in the midst of my address on the 2nd.

I must knock off a letter to Mary Rhodes tonight, for I guess that is about the best way I can send along a note to Mrs. Brandon from whose letter, enclosed, I presume a letter delivered by a mutual friend might serve as the best means of communication.

And speaking of Mary Rhodes recalls a news item I heard over Lowell Thomas' broadcast tonight, that somebody or other is recommending a fusion of all Protestant Churches and the author of the piece is quite as assuming that there isn't much denominational feeling among the various Protestant sects. I hope the man is right, but every time I have touched upon such an idea to fervent Episcopalians, they have all applauded the idea, with only one proviso, -- that all the other sects forasake their own particular denomination, and become Episcopalians, from whose tenants they themselves would never budge an inch.

That, I suppose, is known as cooperation or some such name, but whatever it is, I am hope the proposition gets further on a national suggestion than it has on individual contact in my experience.

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And speaking of the Church recalls an observation on Spirituals that Peter made to me the other day. While at the Post Office, I had noticed the radio was grinding out some rather doleful hymns until someone mercifully stifled the thing. Peter, in pensive mood, was lounging about the gallery, and as I started to leave, he said:

"Mr. Francois, --you know what, "--and after I admitted I didn't, he resumed: "You know I can't find much in them Christian songs.....it don't look like they ever sets my foots a-singin' and for what's them folks claims they'se a-singin', me, I looks like I can't ever hardly make out the words."

Really, I think Peter's got something there.

Mrs. Holloman telephoned from Alexandria this afternoon. She said a cold prevented her from getting up this way this week, but she threatens to pass this way next Wednesday, which she may or may not do, bringing a photographer with her to snap the likeness of Emanuel Prudhomme holding the cotton boll and the portrait of the Black Swan which Mr. Prudhomme, parenthetically isn't holding, but which I am.

She said she invited little Miss Alberta out to supper in New Orleans last Saturday. They should make an excellent pair, and I am glad I effected that acquaintance.

The Morgan Whitneys of New Orleans who passed this way last Saturday sent me a bottle of champagne, which was very nice of them. I hope Brigham Young's grandson doesn't send me one of those several extra appendages his grandfather is reported to have married. I shall pass along the champagne to J. H. and Celeste so they can toast whatever is to be toasted on Christmas Eve when most of the Henrys' blow in. All I ask is that I don't have to be present.

A Churrier and Ives Christmas card came from the New Orleans Pinacs today. It was good to hear from them for they are kindly people. They live on General Taylor Street, the only street I ever heard of, - and this for the first time, - in any American city bearing the title of the man for whom it was named.

I am bound to knock off quite a few letters tonight, but before undertaking them, I think I shall indulge in a cup of Tender Leaf Tea and a couple of pages of The Frontier In American History, which will provide a please bracer. I do hope you are equally relaxed at this moment and that your cold has sure enough gone for good. Would you have two lumps or three in your cup....

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Friday, December 16th, 1949.

Memorandum:

I don't remember ever having been quite so tired, and yet, curiously enough, I object to the feeling on the grounds that I can't seem to find any good excuse for it.

After a frolic, one takes a headache as a part of the investment costs of the night before, and accepts the situation stoically enough, but enervation, following no exertion, seems ridiculous.

And yet, glancing backward, as between 5:30 this morning to 9 o'clock tonight, I can't recall a minute when I have been alone, and perhaps my rural habits have edged me into a custom of occasionally being along with Grandpa for at least five minutes, and the absence of that five minute interlude is what I am fulminating about.

What with Arenbourg's birthday to be celebrated, I ordered some camellias yesterday from an Alexandria nursery, expecting them to be delivered today. When I saw a half dozen on the store gallery this afternoon, I concluded they were "us-es", and nearly gathered them up and whisked them away, before Celeste told me they were some she had acquired. I helped her set them out with the assistance of 4 men, which shouldn't have flattened me out exactly, but now that I have ached enough on this score, I reckon all my tiredness must stem from the disappointment I experienced in coming so near yet so far to the Arenbourg festival. But tomorrow will do just as well for that purpose, and what with a promise of rain, it will be even better for them to arrive on the morrow.

What with last year's drought having devastated our collection, I am particularly anxious to get a few in place this year, and since the darkies always seem to think Saturday is a particularly lucky day to transplant, perhaps I shall be the happier in the end that today's shipment was intended for "over the fence".

This morning about 10 I had an unexpected plaisir. Dee-dee, little Robert and Log, - that is to say, father, son and son-in-law, - appeared on my back gallery. They

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were toating a big old bag, a hole cut in the lower corner on each side, from whence protruded the head of a turkey. They explained that what with Christmas a week off, they thought I might like a couple of turkeys so I could count on them, and accordingly had fetched them a week in advance.

It is just a detail how I might contend with two great American birds, but I licked my chops in anticipation, and blessed my colored friends for providing such heavy provender for the holidays. We had a round of wine, and, as they departed, each found a bundle of Christmas things to carry back to Little River with them.

As for the gobblers, they were beautiful, probably weight 15 or 20 pounds each. They are all white, save a black line near the tip of their tail feathers, making a pretty design when they spread their vast and impressive fans.

At noon I telephoned Dr. Combs at the college, telling him there was a bird down ~~here~~ here, bearing the name of his family on its wattles, and I sent a similar message to the Rands. I turned the birds over to Puny who has a fine coop to house them and the Combs and Rands can accordingly grab at their respective birds whenever the impulse moves them and the holiday season gets under way.

Gettysburg, a book I recently heard reviewed, came to hand in a Talking Book today. As I understand it, the authors have taken the personal accounts and experiences of dozens of people, soldiers and civilians, participating in the doings around said Pennsylvania town in early July of 1863, and weaving them together, presented a composite picture of the battle that was a turning point in this history of the country and the world. I may not get to read the book, but I like the idea which might ever so neatly be applied to a million different events, great or small, and so achieve a certain effect that might be ever so interesting.

I haven't finished as yet with The Frontier in American History. Did I mention the one line in the book which I find good, - and ever so applicable to other phases of life than the exercise of Democracy in the ranks of the underprivileged in political spheres. Somebody, writing in the 18th century, - obviously with Jeffersonian concepts of the ability of the common man to govern himself without dictation by the super-douper Hamiltonians, remarked that "a fool can often put on his own coat to better advantage all by himself than when assisted by the cleverness of a wise man".

But enough of this book review business. My radio says you New Yorkers are styling today, "Dryday" but I am hoping the rains promised for Louisiana tomorrow may also drop tons of water into your own cisterns and that you may be accorded a measure of quiet and relaxation over the week end.....

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Sunday, December 18th, 1949.

Memorandum:

What with the mails slowing up to their seasonal pace, I reckon this letter may be the last one to reach you prior to the advent of Christmas in your midst.

I reckon I need not elaborate on how happy I hope yours may be and how fervently I pray it may be both healthful and restful.

So often yesterday I found myself wishing Manhattan could be getting some of the Melrose weather, for the rains came down moderately but steadily all day long and on into the night. This morning the rain clouds seemed to evaporate rather than to move away and before 9 o'clock a radiant sun was all over the place. With no breeze stirring under such a cloudless sky, the thermometer took another jump and tonight at 9, all my doors and windows are wide open and Spring is back again. I think every tree, bush and bulb would be perfectly justified in demanding the weather make up its mind, - one way or the other, - for the violent jumping up and down of the thermometer must certainly have all local vegetable life in a tizzy.

So far as the rain was concerned, I liked all of it, for it gave me some freedom from pilgrims and Heaven knows I had plenty to amuse myself on this machine without getting any opportunity to get lonesome. The rain brought one annoyance, however, for it spoiled the youngest son's intention to go hunting, and anything crossing his will induces a fury, and today's dinner was notable only because he spoke not one word, and two people breaking bread together in a half hour of complete silence does have its ridiculous side. Beginning with Adam and Eve, every Garden of Eden seems to have been possessed of a serpent, and once that fact has been recognized, one tends to take it as a matter of course, although the presence of the thingsometimes is annoying. Ed and Horace had passed by to see me this morning. They said Dr. Rand went to the hospital last night. I am hoping it is nothing serious, although I think all the Rands drive themselves too hard and are, without realizing it, forever treading on quicksands of health. They said their father thought he was having a heart attack, and complained of severe pains about the chest, but a check up revealed a normal pulse and his lungs were in perfect condition. Doctors, of course, have the good sense to have themselves taken to a hospital whenever

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a situation out of the ordinary arises, while the average non-medical soul usually delays hospitalization, I suppose, until something serious has really developed, and because of that, we are inclined to view anyone entering an institution as being in a bad way while members of the profession, perhaps, incline to breeze in and out so casually that their presence there as patients ought not to alarm one particularly.

And in writing thus, the thought rises in my mind if physicians are sometimes hypochondriacs. I know Dr. Rand isn't, but I should find it a paradox indeed if a member of a profession, devoted to curing real and imaginary ills, should sometimes be a victim of the latter himself.

Joe Henry telephoned from Texas this morning, saying he and Juanita would be heading this way along about Wednesday, so the spirit of Christmas will take its inception at that point, I guess. I like them both and I hope they will be able to remain a few days at least.

For Arthur Murray, I heard an observation on dancing that delighted me. Peter and Log passed this way when a hill billy chortle was just tapering off to make way for a weather report.

Peter asked:

"Do some folks really go and have folks learn 'em how to swing out?"

I allowed as how I believe they do, and asked him who taught him. He said:

"One night I went to the honkey-tonk, and I was feelin' good, just a few drinks. And then the music started and me, I jus' grabbed me a partner and started a-jumpin'.....and it looked like always after that I could swing out."

If you are rushed at the moment, you may well skip the enclosures and miss nothing, but I send them along regardless. When my little helper was running through the Fort Worth one, I found myself wondering about the identity of Ruth Browning and why her aunt was mentioned. As we ran over that combination of words a second time, I discovered that anybody saying Ruth Browning Zant might without any difficulty at all make Ruth Browning her own aunt without scarcely noticing it.

The Gettysburg thing I am reading falls into the same category all histories do, - too much emphasis on the mechanics of battle, but somebody sometime might do the same thing, I think, leaving out everything concerning military tactics and bring forth a volume about the human reactions that might be quite readable.....

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Monday, December 19th, 1949.

Memorandum:

I talked with Mrs. Rand this morning. Dr. Rand spent the night under an oxygen tent and was still asleep this morning at 7:30. It is assumed he is better, I hope.

Mrs. Rand asked if I had received a letter from the D. A. R. I had not. It seems, - as I had supposed from the start, - so many people will be out of town for the holiday that the meeting of the D. A. R. would be assured of a wider attendance if it were held on the 9th. So be it, for by that time, some of the local doings may be the better straightened out. This will occasion some adjustment in the Natchitoches meeting, scheduled for the same date, but I reckon that can be arranged. I shall go along with the Alexandria one regardless.

One of Celeste's friends in town whom I have met but once, surprised me with a fat home made chocolate cake with gobs of white icing over it and heavily sprinkled with pecan nuts. I am trying my best to exert self control until tender leaf tea time tonight, but that hour will have to arrive soon or my fortitude will not hold out. With all that icing on the top of the thing, I reckon you may perhaps want but a single lump of sugar at this sitting.

J. H. let me have four or five men this afternoon and I did quite a piece of work at "elrose, tidying up the things that cooked to a tea a while back when quite unaccountably one night the bottom fell out of the thermometer. I had all the bananas out and hauled out, and much ribbon grass, cannas, butterfly lilies, etc. Many of the cannas and lilies were still fresh and green and undoubtedly would have put out more blossoms, assuming the weather remains as warm as at present. But that is extremely doubtful and I thought it better to make a clean sweep while the opportunity and labor were to hand.

I left half a dozen or so stalks of bananas standing along my front gallery, thinking it worth the chance on an absence of future cold spells. If we do get no more, these big old stalks, - up to the eaves, will get to going earlier in March and so should produce bunches of bananas in 1950. The severe cold of last January set them all back so that there were no bunches this year.

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The mail wasn't much today, just a flock of cards from
thither and yon, including one from Rudolph saying he is
leaving for New Mexico on the 22nd, and a note from the
William Wallace Gibsons of 465 Park, - which I take to be
the Ritz Tower, saying they liked their Melrose visit, etc., etc.

It was good spending the early morning at Arenbourg.
I didn't do much but did bed down some things with cotton
hulls, both for warmth and for fertilizer. I was
enchanted to discover that the big old Chinese honeysuckle
is in full flower and its aromatic perfume made lingering by
the Alphonse gate ever so pleasant.
I made no effort tonight to tune in on the Lux Radio
program. As I recall from last week's announcement, it was
something or other in which Tyrone Power and some other stars
were supposed to twinkle, but I didn't know anything about
the play that was named, and since I had already made
elaborate preparations to hear the Macy-Gible thing they
have done for the past two years, I just let the whole
thing slide.

Grandpa and Little Grandpa seem to be enjoying a n
embarrassment of riches these days, for I notice them three
or four times busy at the chase, for the field mice and
rats, I suppose, are starting their annual migration in the
direction of human habitation and the Grandpas are making the
most of it. But somehow one mouse must have slipped by
them last night, for this morning I discovered one had
chewed into a little box of fine crumbs I keep beside
the aquarium, and the stuff had spilled out and piled up
on the turn table of my reading machine occupying the
recess just below the window, the picture of which you may
recall figures as a back drop to my desk. Something
tells me old Zenophon R. Smith wouldn't precisely recommend
fish food for the better functioning of a reading machine,
and I hope the darned stuff doesn't gum up the works too
much. What with one thing and another, I haven't done much
about decorating Yucca for the holiday season as yet.
Mandina lends itself rather nicely for that purpose, and
the stuff I put in the house the other day when George
came to sit on my back gallery still appears to be as
fresh as when I cut it. I am using some unadorned magnolia
leaves, too, and what with a flock of narcissus from
Arenbourg in the foreground of the magnolia clusters, I guess
that will about take care of the decors department. Next
year there may be a banana crop, and that will lend a
subtropical note, for I love to suspend bunches, slashed
from the bushes, like great great chandeliers, from the
rafters, they are so gay in color and so unexpected, while
at night the flamps throw such remarkable shadows from them
on the ceiling. Lord, Lord, but let me get going on my
"must" correspondence, and thence some Tender Leaf and cake....

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Tuesday, December 20th, 1949.

Memorandum:

Tonight is show night and I take it that both of
my meandering secretaries must have headed toward the honkey-
tonk, and so I shall not await their advent before taking
Underwood in hand.

At coffee this morning, Celeste was entranced to tell me
of the grand letter she had had from you. I was glad to ~~hear~~
learn of the communication, too, since it suggested that your
good health permitted you to take pen in hand. I do hope your
cold hasn't swerved back again.

At supper last night, J. A. said he had received a note
from Sister, saying she would get down after Christmas, sometime
during the holidays. This morning Celeste told me that Sister
had telephoned J. A. last night, asking that everyone
come to her house for Christmas night supper. That is typical
tactics, and guaranteed sure-fire ammunition, for if one
member, such as J. A., might accept, then the other could be
cited for snubbing her while if all decline, she can even
better present herself to the world as the neglected member
of the family. She knows perfectly well the General and Joe
will not attend, so she is practically assured of material for
a sob scene any way, and just why anyone such expected people
in their good sense to travel a 200 mile round trip for a hub-
bub supper party, I can't imagine. All in all, what a fine piece
of baggage, but that would scarcely be classed as news.

The weather remains warm, too warm for doing any physical
work except in shirt sleeves. I scurried around in the
cotton hull department, both at Arenbourg and Melrose,
and, if the fertilization these items produce is at all commensurate
with their curious ~~aroma~~ aroma, the effect should be gigantic,
for the latest batch of stuff contains more cotton seed than hulls,
and what with the seed starting to decompose, the resulting
vapors are impressive. I have been keeping all doors and windows
on both front and back galleries open, but what with the
bedding down of the banana roots on the front gallery, the doors
on that side remain but definitely closed. From the appearance
of the sky and local weather reports, more rain is in the offing,

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and that will put things to rights again so far as feeding
back into the earth the chemical that now tend to pass on every
vagrant breeze.

A slight interlude of a couple of hours intervenes between
this paragraph and the one above. A racket in the far corner
of the room suggested that I had successfully baited the trap
for the mouse Little Grandpa had let slip into the house the
other day. Investigation revealed that the mouse trap had come
down on a young rat's tail, giving him sufficient range to
cover all parts of the trap, necessitating a slaughter of the
poor thing, with resulting gore, or easing the trap out on the
gallery for Grandpa to have an extra morsel as a late
supper. The operation required some minutes, - getting the
rat and trap on to the gallery without getting bitten, and once
there, Grandpa's coyness recalled that I had taught him never to
take food directly from my hand but wait until I had placed it
in his dish. Grandpa stuck to his original training, and the
rat floundered frantically as Grandpa wove in and out about
my legs without ever taking a pass at the rat. Eventually I
got the poor rat turned loose when, on entering the house, I
heard someone tapping on the white garden side of the house.

I know not how long the tapping had been going on. It was
the Dark Duke, wanting to pass along some local plantation
doings for my delectation. A flock of men had been building
a temporary fence this afternoon, the overseer standing alongside,
observing operations from horseback when some negro from the
Red River passed by, and apparently a little high. Be that as it
may, while the boys were laboring with their fence posts,
the little or rather Red River negro, - called T, I believe,
suddenly declared that he was going to kill Mr. Earnest, the
overseer, and suddenly lunged at him with an open knife. Everyone
was thunderstruck, and several of the boys rushed up to overpower
T who had already ripped Mr. Earnest's coat. Ezra grabbed T,
but the latter's knife came down, penetrating the flesh from
top to bottom of the space between the thumb of the right hand and
the hand. T in the mean time ran off across the fields and what
became of him, I know not. The Dark Duke took Ezra to Dr.
Yaeger in Cloutierville to have three stitches sewed in. It was
the understanding of the Dark Duke that the overseer was called
into the office and was given a check for the balance of the
year and his dismissal. I can't imagine what the missing parts
of this narrative may cover, but obviously there are some
missing, and possibly J. H. will change his mind before another
dawn breaks. It will supply good talk for the impending holiday
season, however, and perhaps I shall get the straight of in on the
morrow, and perhaps I never shall.

Christmas Shopping must be cutting down the pilgrimage business.
We had the head of the Shreveport Schools and the Minden or Webster
Parish school head this morning, and they remained for dinner, but
little else. Tomorrow la Holloman is scheduled for dictation, but
what with Santa all over the place, perhaps she will come and perhaps
not. S

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Wednesday, December 21st, 1949.

Memorandum:

How nice of you to take time out to pen me a line to
let me know things are moving smoothly from this point to
908, and by inference, I gather your good health, in spite
of the business, domestic and holiday pressure, is holding.

And I am glad to know you are weakening, so far as possibly
not waiting until the 25th to peep inside at least one package,
for I am forever feeling such impulses and it is comforting to
know that I am not alone in such temptations.

The incoming mail continues rather heavy, but made up
almost exclusively of the chaff that characterizes most
stuff during the mad pre-holiday rush. It's rather
curious how many cards I have received this year which
appear to be from people I can't remember ever having met
or "heard tell of", with some of them indicating a desire
on the part of the writer to be a pilgrim after the new year
gets under way. These seem to come from various places in
central Louisiana, possibly, I suppose, from people who
may have heard of Melrose and are taking this opportunity
to insert an opening wedge later. This seems a little bit
outlandish, assuming they may have written on the strength
of my picture in the Picayune, --I can think of no other
route by which they might have been stirred up, unless,
perhaps, they come from people who have had friends who at
one time or another passed this way. Even so, the Christmas
cards do seem odd, however they may have been contrived.

I saw Puny for a few moments this morning, after he
had been to town and back with the merchant planter. He
said the latter had remarked about the doings late yesterday,
and that he thought the overseer would be retired on a small
pension. No one seems to have heard anything about what
if anything was done about the negro who went haywire. What
with all the arrests in this area during the past month,
perhaps it is felt it is just as well to play nothing
ever happened, and so let the whole business evaporate.

I saw J. H. at supper, just after he had returned from
a quick trip to Alexandria where he dropped by the Baptist
Hospital to inquire after Dr. Rand. The latter is out of
danger, it is said, but must remain in bed for 4 or 5 weeks.
He is not permitted visitors, and so I shall feel a little
more contented about remaining here until I go down that
way on the 9th, when I shall take time out to be with him for
a while.

3981

0888

As you will note from the enclosure, Mrs. Holloman

did not come for dictation today. I shall write her not to come on Monday, the 26th. After all, since the whole world will be celebrating Christmas on that day, it is more than probable that I shall have my lap full of pilgrims.

But even though none might come, I most certainly would not contemplate "busting in" on the Prudhommes on such a holiday to put a photographer at work in their drawing room. There is a certain absence of regard for others in her that is not the same but somehow suggests a more positive jamming through things regardless that is one of Mr. Kane's cardinal complexes, and I most certainly don't propose to be a party to furthering anything suggestive of such procedure.

I wish I had some sort of a measuring machine that would indicate how much enervation can be ascribed to the current warm, humid weather. I seem to have a slight cold, - without sniffles, something that seems to "hoover" between my jaw and ear, or perhaps it is a touch of neuritis. I chatted with Zelma in the store for a moment this morning, and she was complaining about having no pep and less ambition, and somehow after hearing her lay the whole business on to the weather, I imagined I was beginning to feel better, having thus had the cause of the general state of lassitude accounted for. Perhaps that may be the reason, too, why all plantation work has been suspended, what with at least half of the workers being at least half high from day to day. A cold snap is promised for Thursday night, and perhaps that will put every one back into the pink of condition again, I hope.

In your last letter, you mentioned an item of which I had not heard anything about, and which I found ever so interesting, -- the labors devoted by a number of people who have been spending months going through the private papers of P. D. R. I reckon this vast source material will supply an endless amount of research for historians, biographers, etc., and I find myself wondering if some effort will eventually be made to put them, - all the papers, - into print eventually after the manner of the Jefferson papers, as provided for by Mr. Pehr or The New York Times, - and come to think of it, I am wondering what progress is being made with the Jefferson papers and if any of the contemplated several volumes have yet appeared.

If the "oosevelt papers are ever issued, let us hope that may be accomplished while Madam Roosevelt is about, for it would seem her assistance on many a point would be of inestimable value.

So many things to talk about.....

0888

3982

Thursday, December 22nd, 1949.

Memorandum:

Gold, cold in Louisiana, but fairly moderate in New York, which doesn't seem to make any sense geographically, but I am glad for your side.

What with the weather being too unseasonable to do anything outside, I have stuck pretty close to my desk today, except for the Knipmayer interlude, and mighty noble I have felt about the success I had in resisting an almost uncontrollable desire to set my reading machine spinning, for The Travels of Marco Polo came in the morning mail, and never having dipped into them, I am terribly impatient to have a sample or two to satisfy my curiosity. Alexander Scourby is the reader, and so, eventually, about Tender Leaf tea time, I should really be enjoying myself. Of course the joke will be on me if the thing actually turns out to be duller than dull. Still, that's one thing about a reading machine when one is a little sleepy, for if the stuff isn't too fascinating, one's head can start nodding without the slightest difficulty.

The mail continues in the pre-holiday volume, with several items again from people I don't remember, but there were no cards today from people expressing the wish to be pilgrims.

I never felt so close to Lestan and his Bermuda (La Cote Joyeuse) as when a letter and package came to hand in today's post, and I send it along merely as a sample. Once I remember I didn't know Melrose had a Post Office, but Mr. Powell, whom I don't remember, at least had heard of Bermuda, it appears.

A second card from Rudolph, - both Christmas cards, - was interesting. The first one reached me a couple of days ago, wishing me a Merry Christmas and saying he was going to see his people, leaving on the 22nd. Today's card, I thought, had been inadvertently sent in duplicate, but on reading it, discovered he hoped to get over this way toward the end of January and that he was sending me a piece of Roquefort for Christmas and he would be in Green Tree, New Mexico during the holidays, - his people's residence. I never

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get too many Christmas cards, but getting two from the same source seemed a little odd, unless, indeed, the realization of a January visit impelled him to have a second go at the greetings department.

I was a couple minutes late for supper tonight, and was surprised to find Juanita still at table. It seems she and Joe arrived about 4 this afternoon.

We chatted for a few minutes after supper, and then I accompanied her as next door, where I make it a practice never to attend night gatherings of any type. Already there was a discussion going as to the invitation to Christmas night supper in Shreveport. I didn't remain two minutes, and Joe seemed glad to find an excuse to head out for the store while I was entranced to scurry through the gardens to Yucca, enchanted to leave all that scuffle behind me and to drink in the beauty of the night, what with the thin sickle of the new moon almost in conjunction with that bright evening star now in the Western sky in the early night, - possibly even Arcturus, or whatever, but a mighty pretty star on this cold, cloudless night it is.

At coffee this morning, Celeste read me a news item from the Alexandria Town Talk, announcing the pushing back of the D. A. R. meeting from the 2nd to the 9th. How characteristically baggy both that organization in Alexandria and the one in Natchitoches are, for the former has never yet advised me of the change in the date, while the latter has not as yet issued a formal invitation or acknowledgement that I have been bidden, and the latter is heading for a jolt when, - and if, - the invitation comes to hand, and I advise them that I shall be busy on the 9th, trying to pump some sense into their Alexandria sisterhood.

My self control is being put to a trying test in my efforts to resist opening one package or another which has come to hand in the recent mails. For example, there is a small package, thin-thin and about 4 inches square, from somebody or other named Kerpler living in Pineville, - I don't ever remember hearing of such a person, and I am wondering what impells this item. And from further afield, there is something in the form of a suit box from Nina McInnes, which is certainly not expected, and again there is another thing about the same size that was sent me from the store by special messenger, with instructions to the latter not to drop it and to give it to no one but me. There is no cancellation stamp, which, were there one, would undoubtedly read "Clagny", - if, indeed, memory serves me correctly in recalling the name of Mme. de Montespan's country residence. I feel awfully noble thus far, and I reckon I shall continue to maintain my restraint, but I must confess I am curious.....

3984

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Friday, December 23rd, 1949.

Memorandum:

And speaking of the fabulous riches that Marco Polo reported in old Cathay, you just ought to see my bed, whose counterpane looks like all the spirits of Christmas rolled into one.

Your Christmas box came in this morning's post, need I explain.

But I don't have to tell you, knowing me as you do, that I have only eyes for little old Yucca sitting here on the little round table along side my desk. He is the most elegant duck I have ever seen, and from here on out, he is going to be the joy of my life. How marvelously he is contrived and how elegantly decorated. Every feather suggests separate individuality and his lovely red head, his elegant white body with its black markings at the breast and tail are all so perfect that I can't keep my eyes off him as I write, and I can't keep my hands off him when I am not writing.

The Madam used to say that my old white Yucca was the most spoiled duck in Louisiana, but my new little Yucca has already had more affection expended on him in a day than big old Yucca ever had in a life time. In fine, I am but completely entranced with the whole business, from the tip of his gray beak to the tip of his ebony tail, and the nicest thing about him is that every time I glance in his direction, every time I pick him up to see if he is still just as nice as I thought him to be at first glance, it will be as though a little bit of Lydia were right here, so that he, as the symbol, will always be almost as one with the giver.

And how terribly, terribly nice of you to provide so elegantly in my behalf for "D. A. R. Day". It is such an elegant piece of material and so perfectly worked out in design to suit the very costume I have already glanced at for that go-round with the D. A. R.'s. It is so wonderful when a gift is so timely and so well thought out and so harmonious for a special purpose to inaugurate it. I reckon I shall have to leave little Yucca at home when I take to the big road for "conference", but it's going to be such a pleasant sensation while Yucca remains behind to look out for Yucca, the "D. A. R. Day" will be traveling with me, and the whole trip will be the more successful because I shall feel in the presence of that object about my person the very inspiration which will guarantee success throughout.

How nice you are.

3985

As for all the other elegant things, - the ones currently gracing my counterpane, I have them all beautifully spread out, and later tonight I shall move them about into some kind of order with a view to making use of some of the lovely paper you so thoughtfully included with them. Naturally I have already in mind a dozen different ones who will be enchanted with this item or that, this dress material or that, this red boot or that, this candy cane or that, this stocking of good things or that, this cravate or that, etc., etc., ad-in-finitum. It affords me so much pleasure just to look at the whole elegant assortment that I want to gaze on the whole wonderful collection for a while before separating the billions of individual objects into separate packages.

What happiness you have provided for so many, many friends up and down the road, and if your heart doesn't glow with satisfaction on the 25th, it will mean the telepathy of gratitude isn't functioning at all.

And how characteristically thoughtful of you to wrap my things in separate color papers, so that I could so easily lay hold of the gift for Celeste. I marched straight to her house and asked her to put it on her tree for herself. She was quite touched at your gifts, for naturally it was a complete surprise, and she carefully put it a little to one side of the main stack of unwrapped packages, - or rather the packages, not of which has had its wrappings removed. I lingered but for a few moments, but I could tell easily enough by the way she kept glancing in that direction that she could scarcely wait until she might be alone, and could snatch at least one quick exploratory glance while no one was in the room.

And may I tell you that your elegant air mail letter came to hand and that I lapped up every line of it. And may I congratulate you on the exquisite artistry of your letter to la bag, or calling her promise to send you the particulars which she had failed to carry through. That was a masterpiece.

And may I congratulate you on having contacted the prospective biographer of one A. Maurer, - isn't it funny, I have forgotten the spelling of his name momentarily. I have no doubt the address you discovered in the telephone book is the proper one, for as they formerly lived in Turtle Bay, - East 48th or 49th Street, I have no doubt the address you mentioned is in the same neighborhood where they probably continue to live, but nearer East River.

And how neatly you expressed my own feeling of the moment when you referred to your last week end. Christmas as being quite enough, and the impending week end doesn't matter so much. What with Yucca here beside me, by D. A. R Day cravate tucked in my armoire and my counterpane looking like a Magic Carpet slipping in from all the golden East, I am slap in the middle of Christmas and I love it because I.....!

3986

Saturday, Christmas Eve, 1949.

Thursday

Memorandum:

It seems odd to find myself writing a Saturday dateline, but with the holiday spirit having put the usual routine so out of gear, and withal, being a little tired, I feel a little conversation at this hour when all Cristendom is communing with others whom they hold in deepest affection, will not be entirely out of order.

My day has been remarkably free of pilgrims and friends with one or two quite unexpected exceptions.

Take for example the appearance of Irma Somperyac Willard at my door this afternoon. Her son, who must be about six feet four inches in height, was with her. Irma has recently received some kind of a political (Louisiana) appointment on some kind of an Art commission, and says she expects to live in the Pelican State, with headquarters at Baton Rouge, I believe. Her son graduates from Annapolis this year. Surely Ponds Gold Cream or something of the sort must have a new wrinkle in the Art of Cosmetics, for the lady doesn't look a bit different from when we last saw her. She only stopped in for a brief call, but asked if she mightn't come back for a real visit. I shouldn't be at all surprised to see her again within a decade, assuming we survive, and by then, I suppose, she will appear even younger.

I never did get to turn on my radio today, and so I do not know what kind of weather Manhattan is having, but I assume your balmy breezes of yesterday may well have cooled down a bit. At Melrose we had a very hard frost last night, with everything in the first dawn looking at though it had been sugar coated during the night. On taking one glance at the White Garden before leaping out of bed, I made up my mind I simply had to scurry up the road to have a look at Arenbourg with its contrasting blue surface of the river before sun up, and it was as beautiful and white as Messrs Currier and Ives could ever have contrived. I wasn't gone long and was back at Yucca before sun up, but I did loose track of what the weather was doing in your area in consequence of my absence from the "holy roller".

I found Juanita at the big house balancing a cup of coffee she had stirred up before any of the servants had

3388

arrived, and later we breakfasted together, being joined by the General and his wife before we were finished. Everybody seems to be in fine form and we had a merry third cup of coffee together. The General said while driving up from Baton Rouge he had listened to two things on the radio that had delighted him, --the Court scene from "Miracle on 34th Street", which I should have liked, and Joe Lewis or is it Louis, reciting Clement Moore's "Night Before Christmas" which I should have loved.

I have always liked the Parlange card, and perhaps I have sent one along before, but in case I haven't, I send this one for you to see. I don't want it back and I don't want the Mary Lambdin letter back either, but it seems to me it should be saved, it is such a splendid account of contemporary doing in Natchez, and since several places are mentioned and Miss Maude referred to, it should perhaps find a place somewhere or other, either in the Memorandum or in something relating to Natchez.

Fortified as I am in my fine sheep lined mules, which should like a strange combination, and armed with a pack of Kools, little old Yucca sitting on the corner of my Reading Machine, I have been exploring Cathay at a great rate with Marco Polo. The book turns out ever so much different from what I had expected, so much more meager in some respects, so much more illuminating in others than I had ever envisioned. In the latter category, for example, I had never known before of the reverence the fabulous Chinese Emperor had for the four major religions obtaining in his Kingdom, where among others, Christianity seems to have been widely practiced in the mid 1200's.. In all the recent reading I have done about China, nothing has ever been said either about Kublai Khan's postal service with all parts of his sprawling empire, he program to keep all roads planted on both sides with fine shade trees, and the placing of pillars or columns or heaps of stones through desert tracks, thus making the trade routes always well defined. And I had never heard of his vast granaries throughout all the provinces, constantly filled to capacity against lean years so that in spite of crop failures, the inhabitants were never without food in times of disaster. These points and others seem to recommend the book to the widest reading in modern times, both in the Occident as well as in China itself.

Intermittently all day and especially since dark, the explosions of fire crackers have been sounding all about. It's a Christmas custom in this section to which I shall never become accustomed. But I see I have consumed my allotted space, and so I shall turn back to Mr. Polo, on one side, Tender Leaf on the other, and little old Yucca slap in the middle of things.....

3388

Memorandum: Sunday, being Christmas, 1949.

Everything was so nice and little old Yucca remains my pride and joy, slap in front of my typewriter.

I started the day off leisurely. Usually on Sunday morning's I listen to a farm program, over a Shreveport station, conducted by the County Agricultural Agent, - in this case, a negro, who devotes his radio time to interviews with negro farmers in Parishes in the Shreveport area. His interviews are interspersed by spirituals sung by 4 or 5 negroes, - the Ever Read Gospel Singers. Frequently I hear spirituals that are new to me, such as "Something Inside You", as well as the old familiar ones, such as "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and so on. This Christmas morning, following a round about clover cover crops, etc., the negro announcer said quite casually:

"And now the Ever Ready Gospel singers will do Something Inside You."

Naturally, at that, I fell out of bed, and thus the day got under way.

But it was time, for several of my friends usually pass this way early on Christmas day and before I was fully clad, a tappy started on my door.

Along about 9 o'clock I received a message to call Western Union. It was a telegram from Helen Baldwin, saying she and Caroline would like to pass this way on Tuesday evening.. I shall be glad to see them and I assume they will spend the night.

While I was at the store, putting through the Western Union call, - the line was ever so busy, - many of my friends called on me and not finding me at home, told the Little King who chanced to be here that they would return on the morrow, so I reckon Monday may be a busier day than I had supposed, - Clemence, Aurellia, Ezra and his children, Dee-dee, Little Robert and so on.

Thanks to you, I have Christmas gifts for them all, and if I could but convey the pleasure your gifts, already bestowed, have you would be delighted. The little red shoes, of course, are knock outs, and the candy canes and the cornucopias.

888C

3989

For sheer swelling of pride, I guess the Dark Duke surpassed all in radiation of his delight with the necktie with the scroll like design running the length of the tie. Somehow his reaction recalled to mind that poem of Dora's entitled "Big Spender" or some such.

A little after 10, Pat came over to say the Henrys were all gathering at Celeste's tree and awaiting me. There was a distribution of presents and the opening of the same, and it was all very Harper's Bazaar and gay without depth. I came out very nicely with cakes and candies from Ora and R. B., Paynie and Frances and Adam Regd, and very gay blue and white outing pajamas from Celeste and J. H., socks from Joe and Juanita, and from the Baton Rouge Henrys seven 1 bottles of wine, one being of blackberry, - a port, - which I shall open when the Ramsey-Baldwin duo are here, and a couple of bottles of Sherry which I shall not open very soon, since I don't care much about Sherry, although the bottles are ever so nice more like decanters than bottles, slightly on the urn shape in design and topped by elongated glass stoppers instead of corks. I shall keep them, after using the Sherry, for dispensing port. (And isn't it odd how I write Sherry, which I don't much care for, with a big S, and port, which I do like, with a little letter.)

During the excitement, the champagne the Morgan Whitneys sent me was brought out, properly chilled, and it was very nice, - Mums, Rheims, 1937.

Just at noon we dined and it was all ever so pleasant. The Baton Rouge Henrys took off for the wife's sister's home somewhere beyond Shreveport, and J. H. and Celeste drove to Shreveport to take supper with Sister.

Back at Yucca, just as some colored people came in through the White Garden, some white folks came in on the other side of the house, and as usual, color had to give way, and perhaps they will come back on the morrow. The white folks were the lady doctor who brought me a fine bottle of whiskey, and with her she brought Attala Hertzog and the latter's aunt, Mrs. Mary David of Alexandria, all of whom I like much. Joe Henry joined us while we were in the library of the big house, and Dr. Eleanor and I had a brief moment to compare notes on a couple of points. I am glad she told me, for I may be able to work things somehow or other to the patient's advantage by enunciated philosophies along certain lines well in advance of Celeste's knowledge, which she is bound to know, sooner or later, - that Aurellia, her prized servant, is pregnant. Some hill billy from Gorham has been courting Aurellia, and what the next trick will be, Heaven alone knows, only I feel so sorry for poor Aurellia who has carried such terrific burdens for others on her shoulders all these years. So runs Christmas, and Yucca now wants some tea and some M

188C

3990

Monday, December 26th, 1949.

Memorandum: I have no signature on this letter.

The day after and the weather looks it, what with a slap about face, with warm weather replacing the chill of last week and a fog coming down tonight just before dark that turned on lights in automobiles long before the accustomed hour.

It is so seldom J. H. ever uses a cuss word, I was impressed this morning before breakfast when I saw him at the store. He had held out against all the other members of the family, insisting that someone ought to accept Sister's invitation to Christmas night supper, and when everyone else had refused, he himself drove up with Celeste, just to make Sister happy. It would seem as though he would eventually learn the worth of such efforts, but on that point he appears capable of taking much punishment.

It was the more surprising to hear him report the visit, since he seldom criticises anyone. But it seems their hostess did a heap of carrying on, being pretty high to start with, and mounting to greater heights when these particular guests arrived. And aside from her unpleasantness to J. H. she jumped on Celeste, being furious, it seems, because some paper or other, perhaps in was the caption in the Picayune picture, wherein she was referred to as the present mistress of elrose. Sister declared that Celeste had no right to be called that, and that she, as the only daughter in the family, was exclusively entitled to such a title and so on and so forth, and the air got blue, and Celeste got mad and Sister got higher, and apparently a grand time was had by nobody.

And then, when they were leaving, in typical unpredictable fashion, J. H. suggested the two boys come home to elrose to spend a few days, Sister to come after them, either on Wednesday or Saturday of this week. And so the two boys are here, with nobody looking after them, and each armed with BB guns, busy as bees shooting birds and generally disporting themselves unrestrained.

And that is the thanks J. H. got for having insisted that somebody must drive a couple of hundred round trip miles to take a pass at a slab of cold turkey.

3991

I am glad I said No to Mrs. Holloman's suggestion she pass this way for dictation today. There weren't so very many pilgrims, but those who did pass were the type who should always be received, including Dr. and Mrs. Archinard of New Orleans who were both delightful and helpful in setting me straight on several personalities I wanted to know more about in the Crescent City.

The Joe Henrys departed for Texas this morning at 9, and I hope they come back again soon for I like them.

With a couple of exceptions, I again found myself tnailed up with other things when colored callers passed this way. From where I sit, it looks as though the Christmas gift department will be functioning more at New Year's this season than at any other time. But perhaps that is just as well, since all the doings attendant on last Sunday may have slowed down sufficiently to enable these New Year's presence to strike just the right note, following the let-down of or after the past week end.

As for myself, I am still finding endless enchantment in my little old Yucca, who constantly remains within arm's reach here on my desk while I am thumping this machine, and when I move back three feet and occupy my wing chair in the corner and start my Reading Machine going, little old Yucca hops the short distance with me and occupies the center of my little tea table sitting along side.

I should have done more correspondence last night but I took the evening off to make further explorations with Marco Polo. Probably at the end of the book there will be some kind of a listing of proper names, or rather the names of cities, provinces, etc., giving the modern equivalent, and it is a pity, especially in the case of the Talking Book, that such contemporary names were followed in parenthesis immediately after the names as they were styled in 1295. One city is given an unusual amount of sapce, and the way Mr. Scourby says it sounds as though it might be spelled Tien-Sigh. From the scant description of its locality, and its proximity to the sea, I gather it may be the place currently called Tien Sein, or however that port, which until recently was under French domination, was or is spelled. In the 1200's, the place was credited with something over a million "fire-places", meaning homes, I assume, which would lead one to suppose the city may well have numbered a population of at least five million, which certainly seems remarkable.

Well, so much for that, and will you forgive an inordinately dull letter. It's all little old Yucca's fault, eyeing me as he is, and seemingly impatient to hop from my desk to the tea table

3992

Tuesday, December 27th, 1949.

Memorandum:

In today's post should go forward a letter of Saturday, I believe it was, that failed to go forward in yesterday's post.

All in all, it has been a fairly busy day, with much rain to make getting about seem the busier, as one hopped from puddle to puddle and attempted the inevitable effort of skipping between the rain drops.

A letter in the morning post announced that Mrs. Holloman would pass this way, if the weather wasn't too bad. It didn't look too good to me, but she came regardless, together with a photographer, and forthwith at 2:00, we journeyed up the Joyeous Coast to "Uncle Phanor's", to take the photograph of old Mr. Emanuel Prudhoom, holding the poll of cotton. As the present Prudhommes had expressed approval that we might take the likeness, it was something of a surprise when they decided we should not take the picture down from its place on the drawing room wall, where it hung slap behind a big old Christmas tree. I don't know what their objection could have been unless they thought, perhaps, the frame might fall apart.

We were able to get a step ladder, however, and by the photographer resting with his head against the ceiling and shooting his camera at a dubious angle, something, -- I hope, -- was accomplished although it may turn out that what with all the Christmas tree intervening, Mr. Emanuel in said photograph of his portrait, may turn out to be holding some kind of a Christmas tree decoration instead of a cotton boll. I must say that the Prudhommes were very indly but, -- and I guess they didn't realize it, -- not very helpful.

Returning to Yucca, I was able to give Mrs. Holloman quite a bit of dictation before she headed back to Alexandria along about first dark.

Hurriedly I yanked off my beard and headed for supper at Melrose when I bumped into J. H. who had five or six Buckingham of Alabama with him. They seemed to be old acquaintances of his, and so I gave them a little tour through the mud, sipping the big house where supper was in full swing.

3993

A little before 7, Carolyn and Helen arrived. They had been driving through rain all day and were glad to have that journey behind them, I guess.

Carolyn's permanent official headquarters will be in Birmingham, which will not be too far from Marshall, as contemporary distances are calculated, and what with the Gulf area as her particular province, I reckon we are likely to see more of her than during the past couple of years. We chatted at Yucca, covering a wide field, the prospective story of cotton, contemporary trends in racial relations, etc. Everybody's energies were not at top level, what with all three of us having had a fairly busy day, and we accordingly said Goodnight early. I plied them with fruit cake and blackberry wine. The former was alright, the latter was a disappointment. Eugene had given me a bottle of Jewish sacramental wine, a kind of heavy Sauterne, and so that went better than the blackberry which I but definitely rejected.

They will return to Texas tomorrow noon, which certainly makes a brief visit, but it is good to see them for a little chat, and when the new program gets arranged in Birmingham, perhaps they may be able to make Malrose a rendezvous spot sometime in early summer.

Last night I finished with Mr. Polo's travels, and was disappointed in the way it petered out. But the sections of the earlier account of things in China made the whole thing worth reading and I shall dip into that part again.

Before folding up my beard last night, I had a go at "White House Diary" by Mrs. Nesbitt, and found it to my liking. I recall your mention of the publication and I hope you had an opportunity to explore it throughout for I imagine it holds up nicely to the end. Of course I should love to know who the bag's identity may be, - the one who was a frequent guest at the White House and was forever, and unfailingly, up-setting the schedule of the place by insisting on cocktails, for example, being served upstairs at precisely the moment dinner was scheduled downstairs, etc., etc. I shall cast about a little to determine that one and I think we shall eventually find out.

The other letter accompanying this one inadvertently failed to get started in time. Forgive the oversight, and let us hope that smooth moving flow may get back in the regular channel, now that the holidays are about spent...

3994

Wednesday, December 28th, 1949.

Memorandum:

The best news I heard in the past 24 hours is that you all had a good rain in the neighborhood of your reservoirs. I continue to hold the thought you may have more and more.

Carolyn and Helen left this afternoon. The weather was fine and what with tonight's big moon, perhaps the trip won't be too wearing, but I am glad I don't have to drive to Waco, where ever Waco may be.

I recommended that they sleep late this morning, and that afforded me an opportunity to get a few things done and to have 9 o'clock coffee across the fence before they were about. I received an invitation to the annual egg-nog party across the fence, which, undoubtedly, is in full swing at the present moment. Those dull priests were to be present and a flock of Hatchitoches biddies, I suppose, plus the younger widows from Magnolia and so on. Naturally I declined, preferring this opportunity for a little chat and after that, a go at some Tender Leaf and the White House Diary.

The Wenk boys went home this morning, J. A. taking them to town and Raynie on to Shreveport. It was everyone's understanding their mother was coming down to spend the day, but plans apparently were altered.

Indirectly I learned today of an interesting page that might have fallen from a 17th century sheaf of correspondence. It might have been about Mme. de Grignan whose state of mental functioning while under artificial stimulant, might have been reported by wire to her brother by a physician outside the family circle that under said stimulants, said to be ever so frequent, the gray matter is thrown way out of balance. It isn't clear to me why the report should have been communicated in or to such a quarter, suggesting it may have been inspired by Mme. de Grignan herself as a kind of cover up for outrageous doings of late. Psychiatrist treatment, however, is said to be strongly recommended. I suppose subsequent reports during the months or years ahead may speak of an intensity in this direction, but I can't imagine the possibility of much being done about it.

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Carolyn and Helen had coffee at 9:30 across the fence after which they took some pictures about the place and then dropped by Yucca for a little chat before dinner. They are very noble people, I think, and everyone up and down the social ladder from merchant planter to slave likes them. I am glad Pat had an opportunity to talk with them about Mexico at dinner, for they all had many notes to compare and it may good listening.

After lunch, they drove down to see Clemence, but finding her not at home, returned here to say goodbye at which moment Clemence appeared on the back gallery. It was an excellent opportunity for them to have a little go at old times.

As I handed them to their car at the side gate, Mrs. Rand passed through the garden from the front gate, together with her son, Dr. Paul King and, who lives in Hartford, Conn. It was good to speed the departing and to welcome the arriving. Dr. Rand is ever so filled with a desire to chat with people but visitors are still frowned upon by his advisers, and so I find it the kindest thing to do by remaining away until the 9th. I thought Mrs. Rand looked ever so much more rested than the last few times I had seen her. I can't believe she would take an example as exhibited by her husband to slow down a little on her own hook, but there is always that hope.

I am so far behind on correspondence, I reckon I shall not get caught up before the turn of the year. But with the holidays easing off, - I hope, - and a revived routine in the offing, - and routine is the thing, -- perhaps I shall get things back in high gear again shortly. Eventually I shall get around to some radio listening, I hope, too, but if I even grab off the news these days, I seem to have done so as a surprise to myself, and little by way of news seems to be broadcast these days. It seemed to me on Christmas Eve especially every news caster was trying to prove by the meagerness of his reports that "no news is good news", and plenty of nothing seemed to be tossed out on the air waves.

I am so glad of the glimpses of the inside workings of the White House domestic and personal adjustments, as revealed by the White House Diary. How much luckier the 2050 reader will be with such a wealth of detail, as opposed to the 1950 reader of what wasn't put down in scarcely any form, say in 1850.

From Miss Myra's card you will notice the pool is at the back of Devereux, since that is where the terraces are situated. I am so glad water is being introduced on the terrace and eventually the swann lake will be put to rights again. So things turn, and little old Yucca is eyeing me as much as to say it is tea time, and so we shall both fly....

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Thursday, December 29th, 1949.

Memorandum: All blue and gold, and again so springlike a jacket is superfluous.

The in-coming mail is lighter, thank heavens, but I continue to wade through pre-holiday items as circumstances and secretariat permit.

And speaking of delayed investigation of per-holiday arrivals, I tonight got around to a letter from Anita which reached me on the 24th. It was in long hand and accordingly had to be held up for reading since I am dependant upon Mr. Brew for anything outside of the typed word at the moment, - and he has been quite elusive of late. Accompanying the letter is a story, written by her friend, and is in English, and is typed. She asks me to run through it for corrections and send it along to you, as you will note from her letter which I shall forward within a few days. I shall make every effort to get the story read back to me just as soon as possible, although I need not explain to you that even to get my own jewels polished a bit, I have to take the matter up leisurely. I reckon Anita thinks I can do this under my own steam, and perhaps it is just as well that she should think so. As I write this I am reminded of a remark by Dr. Feilding Dunbar who says the worst patient is the one who tends to play down his limitations, thus making it difficult for people to comprehend the true status, -- an effort too often engaged in by people who fear that if a true statement is made, the world will assume he is making too much of a fuss or is just a plain hypochondriac.

In view of the pressure of one thing or another at the moment, it may not be possible for me to get to any manuscript for a few days and I shall not try to write Anita until I have an opportunity to look at the enclosure which is only a couple of pages, single spaced. Should you be writing her before I make my response through your own good offices, I shall appreciate your kindness if you will remark that I have her letter safely to hand and that only the demands of the D. A. R. are holding up an immediate response but that the latter will come through shortly.

It was a fairly hurly-burly day with a few quiet hours at dawning at Arenbourg, after which too many interruptions prevented me from getting much done for myself.

I was of course glad to see Dr. Knipmayer who had little news but is always pleasant. The K.'s and some friends gave

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a dance at the Country Club for a flock of college people last night. Pat attended and Dr. K. reported everything went nicely, with Pat concurring when I saw him at dinner. But Pat, I believe came home a little after 1, following the close of the Country Club frolic while the K. children brought a gang of their associates home with them, and the good Dr. got up at 4 and insisted the frolic, carried over by his children at home, be terminated. He said his wife told him he was rude, but what with a clinic on his hands early this morning, he didn't care so much about the more delicate shades of hospitality after 3:30 and things were still going strong.

On the recommendation of Sister, some exceedingly dull people passed this way from Shreveport, two couples of you married people and a couple of offspring. They got a tour alright, but it wasn't too lengthy, and before they were out the front gate, the Yaegers came with guests by appointment, and we had that round, and so the day spun out and not too proud of it am I, for tiredness coming with productive labor seems wholesome enough but exhaustion coming from psalm singing to dead mules isn't quite so satisfying.

I saw Celeste for 5 minutes at 9 o'clock coffee. She appears as busy as a bee, preparing for some frolic in town on the morrow, etc., etc., and heading for New Orleans on Sunday, I believe. I saw Madam Regard for but a moment in passing, and she was as much aglow as she always is, following a night when the clergy have been guests. Celeste spoke at some length of Carolyn and Helen, expressing the hope they would come this way again real soon. I must say I think it remarkable those girls have the ability to appeal so pleasantly to such a wide variety of personalities.

Only last night, after folding up my beard, did I get around to turn through the Christmas issue of Life, which enchanted me with its several pages of the Michel Angelo murals of the Sistine Chapel. I only got that far before sleep overtook me.

I have tried to rummage around in the ether waves to find some kind of a serious discussion of the new Einstein theory regarding magnetism, to which I have heard but a single and very brief reference. Perhaps the details haven't been released as yet, and possibly I wouldn't comprehend them, were they aired. I have a feeling, however, that they may embrace a concept that is on the way toward a glimpse at another mystery that may have come a little closer to our comprehension. I always suspected Herr Einstein was a great man without knowing much about it, but of course I was convinced on that point after learning that at Princeton he used to do the little girls arithmetic for her who paid him off in jelly beans, which seemed to me about the swellest thing I ever heard. But I see I am about run out and so I shall fold herewith, with little old Yucca along side....

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Friday, December 30th, 1949.

Memorandum:

A full day and I liked it.

What with Arenbourg doing a bit of birthday celebrating by way of the camelia department, and later, what with Melrose getting a couple go-rounds in the planting department, too, the spades have had what probably constitute their final labors of 1949, and everything looks as pretty as a promise.

First off, Arenbourg was the focal center of my activities. May I tell you that some fine white gardenias have been added to the other racial representatives to be found among the Arenbourg children, and that everybody seems pleased with the business.

The plants aren't large, - perhaps two or two and a half feet in height, but very sturdy plants they are, and what with the weather being fine and favorable, I think they have a pretty good chance to make a go of it in fine style.

It was a busy morning all in all, what with several trips up the road and much stirring about, not only with the newly arrived children but also with some of the more seasoned members of the Arenbourg menage, and especially the cape jasmine, which seem to be looking especially pert these days and accordingly attracting sufficient attention to provoke a little extra coddling.

Back home by dinner time and pilgrims before and after dinner, and general doings until about 3:30 or 4:00 when the overseer came to say that J. H. had brought a number of things for the Melrose garden and for over the fence, and would I lend aid and comfort. I would.

I find it an interesting commentary that he favors further planting in front of the big house, camellias, gardenias, etc., and this in spite of obvious opposition on the part of his youngest brother who seems to grow dreadfully unhappy about anything being done for the old place. J. H., on the other hand, in his role of benevolent autocrat, just breezes slap ahead, regardless of reaction.

He likes to supervise the setting out of plants, and while the ones at Arenbourg may never take any prizes, still there is great satisfaction in being able to set them out as I please.

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Of course one of the tricks about raising camellias is to get them set high enough so that the roots will never be bogged down in water, for they, unlike the cape jessamine, can't bear to have damp feet. But J. H. when he undertakes planting, wants all his plants well settled, so that the earth is more or less up to or above the lower branches. He tends to disregard the potential shade when selecting a sight for his camellias, too, and of course, too much sun is devastating to young camellias. I laughed to myself this evening at the number of holes that were started in gay abandon, only to be foresaken after I had frowned on the potential floods of both sun and water some of the items might receive before 1950 had progressed very far.

But by first dark the "elrose and over the fence planting had been completed, with the usual under of excess helpers whose primary contribution is falling over each other. Tomorrow I shall attack each separate planting with proper equipment and dig up those buried too deep and fill in around the roots of those from whose roots the earth was washed away by a terrific deluge from the hose, after the planting had been accomplished. Naturally the camellias need only sufficient water about them, on being transplanted, to force out any air pockets in the ground around them, but "if a little is good, an ocean is better", and if the "elrose camellias aren't completely drowned by tomorrow, I think they may have a fair chance to survive.

At the store this morning, I hurriedly ran through the present issue of Life, devoted to the first half of the 20th century. It seems to be ever so interesting, and I am hoping I may have an opportunity to explore it more leisurely a little later. I didn't know until this issue appeared that the Scopes boy who figured in the Tennessee monkey trial is living in Louisiana. - Shreveport, I believe Pat said.

What with one demand treading on the heels of the next almost all day, I didn't get an opportunity to do more than chat a little with some artists who passed this way during the afternoon with the request that they be permitted to sketch and paint the big house. I turned them loose and at first dark I noticed they were still trying to beat the fading light. I never did get around to catch up with them before they left. The weather is so warm, I have no doubt sin is in the offing, and they probably will not find it possible to complete any unfinished work, should there be any on the easles. And tonight a huge silvery ring encircles the moon, suggesting a rainy New Year's Eve, which will suit me to a T, since it is always cosy enough by myself indoors on nights when it pours, and as for local celebrations, I think dampness never effects whatever frolic is in order. And if we get plenty of rain over the prolonged week end, there will be less pilgrims and I shall like that, since it may afford me an opportunity to get caught up a little in half a dozen departments. I do hope however the weather makes up in Manhattan, your first week of 1950 may set a grand pattern for the remaining 51 ahead.

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Late, the last night of 1949.

Memorandum:

Naturally my thoughts turn in your direction.....

I am hoping this New Year's Eve is finding you either in pleasureable surroundings or within grasp of a morrow that will provide a heap of rest and relaxation, following the busy, busy pre-holiday rounds.

As for myself, I am having the kind of a New Year's Eve to which I have long become accustomed and which I like ever so much. I am alone, physically, at least, but somehow not unlike Louis, Deux, de Baviere, my salon and boudoir are peopled with the friendly fascinating shades of those who mean most, - and I can't think for the life of me I chanced to set that statement down in the plural.

This is the night of the whole year I have come to like best, providing as it always seems to do, both a perception and perspective of the foregoing twelfth month. During the past 365 days I have learned so many things, have met so many interesting people and best of all, have enhanced my appreciation of those blessings, welling up from just one source, which have flowed so constantly and so generously in my direction, making 1949 the happiest year I have ever known.

God and Lydia have been so good to me.